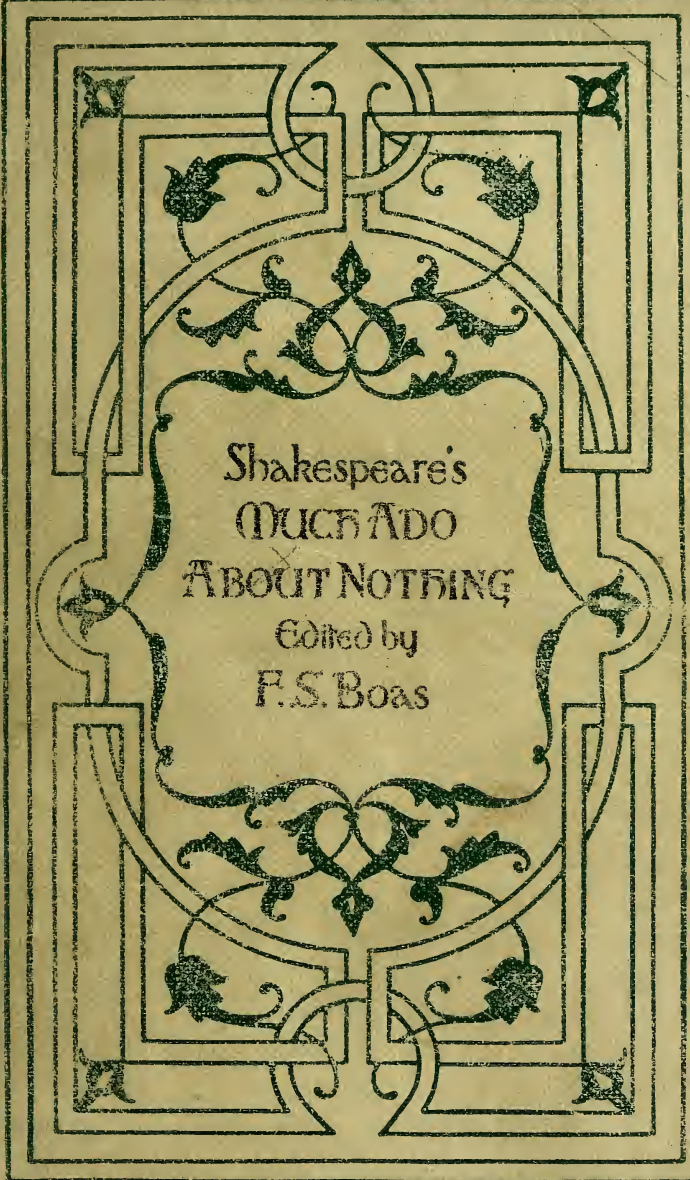
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MUCH ADO
ABOUT NOTHING
Edited by
F. S. Boas

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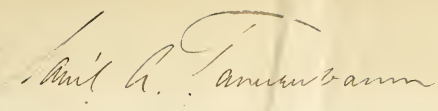

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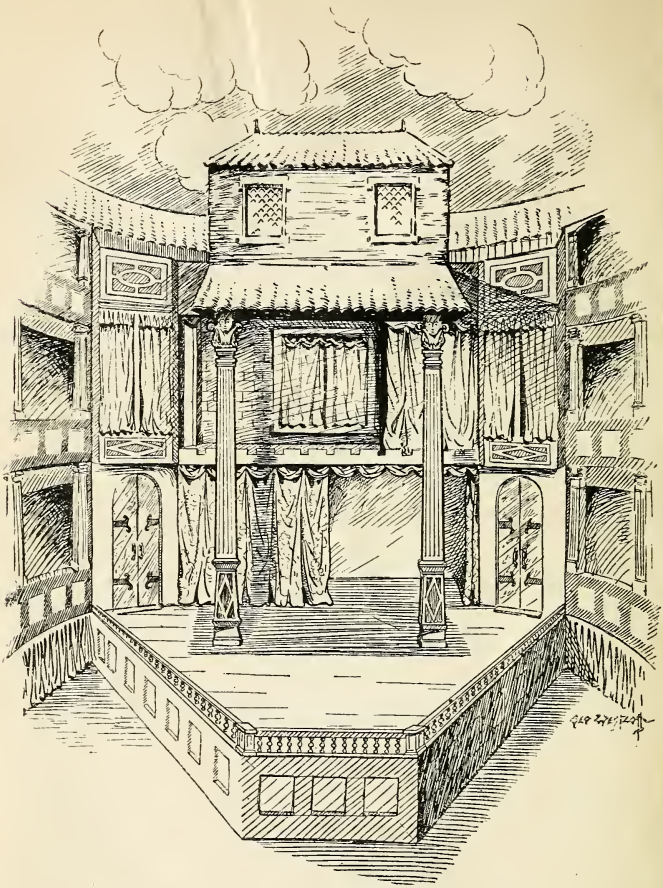

A Typical Shakespearian Stage—Perspective View

From Albright's *The Shaksperian Stage*

(By permission of the Columbia University Press)

SELECT PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

GENERAL EDITOR

J. C. SMITH

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SHAKESPEARE'S MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

F. S. BOAS

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INTRODUCTION

I

There are few more joyous adventures for the student of literature than to trace the diverse fortunes of some of the stories that eventually found their way on to the Elizabethan stage. Tales have their several destinies as chequered, as seemingly capricious as those of men. One may pass from mouth to mouth, from country to country, from novel to poem, and from poem to drama, and yet remain in essence merely what it was at birth. Another, with apparently no loftier credentials at the outset, will attract a *vates sacer* who will give it deathless beauty and significance.

It was the happy fortune of the story which for us is linked with the names of Claudio and Hero to be immortalized in epic form by Ariosto and in dramatic by Shakespeare. Nothing helps more to illuminate and focus its treatment in *Much Ado about Nothing* than an examination of it in its earlier phases.

The kernel of the story is the duping of a lover, who is led to believe that his mistress is false through seeing a man outside her chamber-window at night. In all the versions—with one notable exception—a maid is an agent in the plot. In *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, a Greek romance by the Carian Chariton, which, like *Much Ado about Nothing*, lays its scene in Sicily, though at Syracuse

581515

and not Messina, the maid opens the door to the supposed lover. In the Spanish novel, *Tirante el Blanco*, dating from about 1400, she counterfeits in a leathern mask the fictitious paramour—a hideous negro gardener. Ariosto, in the *Orlando Furioso* (1516), gives her enhanced importance by making her the principal mouthpiece of the tale. The episode is related in Books IV. 51–72, V, and VI. 1–16.

Rinaldo, storm-bound in Scotland, and in quest of adventures, delivers from two murderers on his way to St. Andrews a damsel, who tells him how she came to be in so dire peril. She was Dalinda, paramour of Polinesso, Duke of Albania, and handmaiden to Genevra, daughter of the Scottish king. The duke had sought the princess in marriage, but she had given her love to a young Italian knight, Ariodante, a favourite at her father's court. To prevent their union, Polinesso devised a subtle plot. He assured Ariodante that he would give him ocular proof of Genevra's unchastity, and stationed him in a ruined house opposite her chamber-window, whence Dalinda, arrayed in her mistress's garments (merely, as she thinks, to satisfy a whim of her lover), had let down a rope ladder, by which the duke ascended. Ariodante, overcome by the spectacle, would have killed himself had he not been restrained by his brother Lurcanio, who had been watching at his side. He fled from the court, and the news came that he had drowned himself. Lurcanio thereupon publicly accused Genevra of having caused his brother's death by her wantonness. This, according to Scottish law (as inter-

preted by Ariosto), involved the doom of the princess by fire, unless within a month a champion should arise to prove her innocence by killing her accuser in a duel. Thereupon Polinesso, fearing that Dalinda might reveal his treachery, had, under the plea of sending her to his castle for safety, suborned two villains to murder her on the way. It was from their hands that Rinaldo had saved her.

Here Dalinda's story ends, and the poet himself continues the narrative. Rinaldo presses on to St. Andrews, which he reaches in time to put a stop to a duel between Lurcanio and an unknown knight who has appeared on Genevra's behalf. He denounces Polinesso's treachery, and slays him in combat. Thereupon the stranger knight lifts his helmet, and is seen to be Ariodante, whose death had been falsely reported, and who is now united to Genevra. Dalinda, on Rinaldo's entreaty, is pardoned, and becomes a nun.

The story, alike in its Greek, Spanish, and Italian forms, was a typical product of southern romantic imagination. But Ariosto not only decked it out in the trappings of mediaeval chivalry, but gave it a 'feminist' moral. Through the mouth of Rinaldo he declared (*Orlando Furioso*, iv. 64–6) that, whether Genevra was guilty or not, the law that condemned her, while men were free to love where they listed, was an injustice to womankind.

Such a light-hearted moral did not commend itself to the sage and serious Spenser when he transplanted the story from the Italian epic to Canto iv of the second

book of *The Faerie Queene*. To bend it to his didactic purpose he had to give it a tragic complexion, foreign to its original spirit. The youthful squire, Phaon, who represents Ariodante, is transformed into an example of the awful consequences of intemperate fury. Tricked by a false friend, Philemon, and a handmaiden, Pryene, into the belief that his affianced lady, Claribel, is disloyal, he forthwith kills her, and, when Pryene reveals the plot, he poisons Philemon. He then turns his sword upon Pryene, but as he chases her, he is set upon by Furor and Occasion, and is being done to death when he is rescued by Sir Guyon. In this maddened, blood-stained figure it is difficult to recognize the lineaments of Ariosto's chivalrous, though too credulous, knight.

Doubtless Spenser's old schoolmaster, Richard Mulcaster, kept closer to the Italian original in his *Historie of Ariodante and Geneuora*, a play acted by the ' children ' of Merchant Taylors before the queen at Richmond on Shrove Tuesday, 1582–3.[1] This school play has not come down to us, but another play, *The Partiall Law*, based upon Ariosto's story, has recently been discovered.[2] Though the manuscript is anonymous and undated, the work has the characteristics of the romantic-sentimental school of Fletcher and Massinger, and thus presents an independent dramatic handling of the Claudio-Hero plot in *Much Ado about Nothing*, though Shakespeare's main source, as we shall see, is not Ariosto.

[1] Feuillerat, *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels*, p. 350.

[2] The unique manuscript was bought at a sale by Mr. Bertram Dobell, who printed it with an Introduction in 1908.

The author of *The Partiall Law*, while following the main outlines of the story in the *Orlando Furioso*, transfers the scene from Scotland to Corsica, and changes the names of all the personages. Ariodante becomes Bellamour, 'a supposed Gentleman of Italy, but Prince of Cyprus'; and Polinesso, Duke of Albania, is transformed into Philocres, Prince of Majorca. Genevra and Dalinda are renamed Florabella and Lucina. Additions are also made to the chivalresque machinery of the tale. Thus Philocres, challenging to a tilting all

> Who dare maintain his tenet false, which is,
> That to persist in a neglected love
> Is greater signe of base and abject minde
> Than love or constancy,

is unhorsed by Bellamour, against whom he thus has cause for resentment as his rival both in arms and in love. The part of Florabella is elaborated, and our sympathies are gained for her by her presentiment of evil to come (III. ii), and her noble bearing when slandered and in danger of death.

The *dénouement* is prolonged and made more intricate. A veiled figure, supposed to be the princess, is led into the lists where two champions offer to fight on her behalf. But this veiled figure is Florabella's loyal maid, Fiducia, whom she has bidden impersonate her, while she appears in martial disguise as her own champion. She has, however, to yield the place to Bellamour, who fights with her accuser till the arrival of Sylvander (as Rinaldo is here named) with Lucina reveals the treachery of Philocres, who at once takes to flight. Then follows

an effective *coup de théâtre*, when the supposed princess is unveiled by the king and proves to his consternation to be Fiducia. But all is eventually set right by the reappearance of Florabella in her own clothes, and the discovery that Bellamour—to whom she is now betrothed—is the Prince of Cyprus, whom Sylvander has been seeking to fill the throne left vacant by his father's death.

These additions by the dramatist carry the tale even further into the realms of fantasy than Ariosto had done. And there is another notable addition. Not only do two court lords echo the epic poet's protests against 'the partiall law' under which Florabella stands for sacrifice, but the play ends with

th' abrogation
Of this to women too unjust a Law.

Thus, as in *Much Ado about Nothing*, though in completely different fashion, the fortunes of the sorely tried lovers are interlinked with the themes of the status of women and the relations between the sexes.

II

But long before Ariosto's story was dramatized in *The Partiall Law*, it had gone through a transformation which helped to fit it for Shakespeare's use. A prose version of it had been included by Matteo Bandello in his collection of novels published at Lucca in 1554. By skilful changes and a wholesale shifting of values, Bandello brought the fantastic tale well within the limits of

credibility. He removed the action from a mythical Scotland to Messina, and set it against the historic background of the Sicilian Vespers (March 1282). This tragic event had led King Pedro of Arragon to seize Sicily, and after defeating King Charles of Naples in a sea-fight, to set up his court in Messina. Here (according to Bandello's novel) King Pedro's favourite, Don Timbreo di Cardona, who had distinguished himself in the war, fell in love with Fenicia, daughter of Messer Lionato di Lionati. Don Timbreo and Fenicia are Ariodante and Genevra. But their social positions are now reversed, for Don Timbreo is a very wealthy nobleman, while Fenicia is the daughter of a poor gentleman, though of ancient lineage. Hence it is not till he has in vain sought to make her his mistress that he abases himself to ask for her hand. His rival is a friend, Signor Girondo, who informs him through a young courtier that Fenicia is unchaste, and offers to give him proof thereof. But in Bandello's version of the midnight plot there is no handmaid, nor does the rival lover himself take a direct part. Don Timbreo is persuaded of Fenicia's guilt by seeing below her window the courtier accompanied by two servants, the one arrayed and perfumed as a gallant, the other carrying a ladder, upon which his fellow climbs into the house.

In the omission of the handmaid Bandello's novel differs from the previous versions of the story, and in all that follows it diverges sharply from Ariosto's chivalresque romance. The whole machinery of 'the partiall law' disappears. Bandello knows nothing of it in Sicily,

though the Jacobean dramatist (as has been seen) lets it prevail in the neighbouring island of Corsica. Don Timbreo, instead of fleeing heart-broken into solitude, at once sends to Lionato to repudiate Fenicia as unchaste, though her father looks upon this merely as a pretext for getting rid of a girl without a dowry. She thereupon falls into a swoon which has the semblance of death, and preparations are made for her burial. The funeral is in fact carried out with much pomp, though meanwhile the girl has revived, and has been sent secretly to her uncle's country-house, to the intent that 'growing and changing looks, as one doth with age, they might in two or three years' time marry her under another name'.

Meanwhile, Girondo, struck with remorse, confesses his crime to Don Timbreo beside the tomb in which Fenicia is supposed to be laid, and begs his deceived friend to kill him. But Don Timbreo magnanimously forgives the wrongdoer, whom he urges to repair with him to Lionato's house to let him know the truth, and to entreat his pardon. This Lionato grants on condition that Don Timbreo will accept hereafter any lady whom he may offer him to wife.

After a year has passed Lionato gives Fenicia, under the name of Lucilla, in marriage to Don Timbreo, who fails to recognize her. At the wedding-feast he confesses that though he is right well pleased with his bride, yet were he to live thousands and thousands of years, he would still love, dead though she be, the maiden first betrothed to him. Whereupon his father-in-law joyfully

chides him for having espoused Fenicia, and yet not known her to be his wife And to crown the measure of the joy of the whole company, Girondo asks for the hand of her younger sister, Belfiore, to whom he is forthwith united.

Here we have evidently the source of the Claudio-Hero plot, though it is impossible to say whether Shakespeare drew directly from Bandello's novel, from Belleforest's French version of it (1582), or from some lost play founded on one or the other. The third alternative is the most probable. A play '*panecia*' was acted on New Year's Day, 1574/5, by the Earl of Leicester's men before the queen.[1] In the jumbled spelling of the official accounts, '*panecia*' not improbably represents '*Fenicia*'. If this be so, Elizabeth saw a play based on Bandello's novel eight years before the Merchant Taylors' boys acted one at court on the same theme drawn from Ariosto. As '*panecia*' was performed by Leicester's men, who afterwards became the Lord Chamberlain's players, it is possible that the manuscript remained for a quarter of a century in the hands of the company, and was afterwards worked up by Shakespeare. Some of the stage-directions in *Much Ado about Nothing* suggest that it was founded on an earlier play. Thus at the beginning of Act I. i, those who enter with Leonato include (in both the Quarto and Folio texts) 'Innogen his wife', who is also mentioned in the stage-direction before Act II. i, though in neither case does she take part in

[1] Feuillerat, *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels*, pp. 238 and 239.

the dialogue. Leonato's wife may well have figured in a play taken at first hand from Bandello's novel. For in the novel she is with her husband when Don Timbreo's messenger comes to repudiate the betrothal, and it is while she is washing Fenicia's body for burial that the girl so strangely comes back to life. Her name may thus have drifted from an earlier drama into the stage-directions of *Much Ado about Nothing*, though she fills no part in the Shakespearian comedy.[1]

III

But whatever may have been the form—dramatic or other—in which Bandello's story fell into Shakespeare's hands, his handling of it was obviously inspired throughout by one dominant motive. The choice of title is in itself significant. It is not *Ariodante and Geneura* or *Fenicia* or *The Partiall Law*, but *Much Ado about Nothing*. Shakespeare was not now deeply concerned, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, with the tragic fortunes of two star-crossed lovers, nor, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, with the effect on human destinies of abnormal laws and contracts. He wished to produce a play of which the essence was a recurring series of misunderstandings, grave and comic, due partly to calculated treachery, but in even greater measure to misinterpretation and blundering. For this Bandello's novel offered an admir-

[1] She appears under the name of Verecundia in Jacob Ayrer's *Die schöne Phoenicia*, a play almost certainly based upon Belleforest's version of Bandello's story (cf. Furness, Variorum edition, xxix–xxxi).

able basis, in the trick played upon the lover, his precipitate rejection of his betrothed, her apparent death and mock burial, the remorse of the rivals over her supposed tomb, and the marriage in which the bridegroom fails to recognize the maiden whom he is taking to wife. It was on these elements in the story that Shakespeare fastened to the exclusion of all else, and his changes and additions are conceived in obedience to the same underlying principle of 'much ado about nothing'.

Thus, in the first place, the martial background of Bandello's tale is transformed almost beyond recognition. The conflict between King Pedro and King Charles dwindles into a shadowy 'action', in which the victors lose few gentlemen 'of any sort and none of name' (I. i. 7). It may be inferred, though it is not directly stated, that the contest was between Don Pedro of Arragon and his bastard brother, Don John, who has 'of late stood out against' him (I. iii. 23), and to whom he is now 'reconciled' (I. i. 167). Don John complains bitterly that the 'young start-up', Claudio, whose warlike exploits are magnified by the Messenger in the opening scene, 'hath all the glory of my overthrow' (I. iii. 71–2). Here is Shakespeare's motive for retaining any reference to a war, which can have been little more than one *pour rire*. It suited him to represent the plot against the lovers as the outcome of a defeated enemy's craving for revenge: 'If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way.' Don John has thus a more specific motive for his treachery than Spenser's

Philemon, who was prompted merely by envy or by natural malice, but he is not, as in Ariosto's and Bandello's versions of the tale, a rival wooer. As the fortunes of Claudio and Hero are linked in *Much Ado about Nothing* with those of two other lovers, Benedick and Beatrice, Shakespeare may have wished to avoid complicating the entanglement further by introducing a rival to Claudio.

With the disappearance of the historic background, King Pedro of Arragon's rôle is curiously changed. He is reduced in rank by Shakespeare from a king to a prince, and is turned into a bachelor. He no longer plays a stately and serious part, but contributes to the general 'much ado about nothing' by his genial interference in every one's affairs.

What Don Pedro loses in status is gained by Leonato. He keeps the name given him by Bandello, but instead of being a gentleman of fallen fortunes, he is the wealthy Governor of Messina. Though he owes 'duty' to the prince he keeps state and open house on a viceregal scale. Hence his position is really closer to that of Ariosto's Scottish king than to that of Bandello's simple citizen, and the wellnigh tragic fortunes that befall his house have thus the added poignancy which attaches 'casus illustrium virorum'.

Yet, as has been said above, it was not Shakespeare's cue to exploit to the full the romantic elements in the story of Hero and her lover. What he could do in this kind with an Italian tale he had already shown, tragically, in *Romeo and Juliet*, and was soon to show, lyrically, in *Twelfth Night*. But in the Claudio-Hero plot of *Much*

Ado about Nothing, subtle portraiture and highly-wrought emotion were to be of less account than ingenious elaboration of incident. The suit of the young count for the 'only heir' of the rich Governor of Messina lacks from the first the sentimental interest of the courtier Don Timbreo's wooing of the poor but beautiful Fenicia. And the banter with which Benedick, in Act I. i. 174 ff., receives Claudio's first avowal of his passion helps to prevent the development of our emotional sympathy with him. Moreover, the attention of the audience is speedily diverted to the tangle of misunderstandings which arise from Don Pedro's remarkable offer to impersonate Claudio during the revelling, and in this disguise to win Hero for him (I. i. 341–9). In the next scene, Leonato is informed by his brother, on the report of a serving-man, that the prince has told Claudio that he loves Hero, and means 'to acknowledge it this night in a dance'; whereupon the governor hastens to acquaint his daughter with the news, 'that she may be the better prepared for an answer'. Immediately afterwards, in Scene iii, Don John is told by his man, Borachio, that while acting as a perfumer he had overheard a conversation between Don Pedro and Claudio, in which it was agreed that 'the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio'. This report, though nearer to the truth than that which had reached Leonato, is far enough from it to serve Don John as 'a model to build mischief on'. He tells Claudio at the masked dance (pretending to take him for Benedick) that Don Pedro

'is amorous on Hero', while Borachio roundly declares that he has heard the prince swear 'he would marry her to-night' (II. i. 181–2). The credulous count at once believes that Don Pedro is playing false, and is wooing for himself. Benedick evidently takes the same view, for with mock condolences he too tells Claudio that 'the prince hath got your Hero', and he afterwards rallies Don Pedro on having stolen his friend's bird's-nest. But the prince proves to have been true to his trust, to have wooed Hero in Claudio's name, and to have won her father's consent to the match. Leonato himself ends all doubts by bidding the count 'take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes'.

It has been worth while to trace these entanglements in detail, for they are a distinctive feature of the play. There is not a hint of them in Bandello's story, nor do we find in any other Shakespearian comedy a similar series of false starts. The only explanation of them is that the dramatist wished to ring all possible changes on the theme of 'much ado about nothing'. The game of mystification had an inexhaustible attraction for Elizabethan audiences. And the medley of cross-purposes in these scenes, though without much true comic significance, reveals the credulous nature of Claudio, and foreshadows the graver complications which are to spring from it.

For the 'seven-night' which is to elapse between Hero's betrothal and wedding gives Don John the opportunity for a second, more deeply-laid, stratagem. Here Shakespeare, whether consciously or not, combines

features from Bandello's and Ariosto's narratives. The novelist had represented Don Timbreo as deluded into believing Fenicia false by seeing a disguised serving-man climb up to her chamber. Shakespeare retains the serving-man and gives him increased importance; it is Borachio, not Don John himself, who suggests the plot on the very night before the intended wedding, and arranges its details. The serving-man is necessary to the dramatist's purposes, for it is through Borachio's overheard conversation with his fellow, Conrade, that the crime is eventually brought to light. The watch could not have ventured to arrest so highly placed an offender as Don John.

Borachio makes Hero's waiting-woman, Margaret, an unconscious accomplice in the plot (II. ii. 42–52). Bandello, as has been seen, knows nothing of her, though she had figured in all other versions of the story. Shakespeare may have borrowed her from Ariosto or from Spenser. But she may simply be the natural offspring of the genius of the play itself, which delights in multiplying disguises and misunderstandings. With Borachio masquerading as Hero's lover it was natural that he should be given a female counterpart in Margaret impersonating Hero, so that Claudio and Don Pedro may be doubly deceived. But (as the critics have not failed to note) it is a flaw in the otherwise extraordinarily deft workmanship of the play that Margaret should disappear in Act IV, though a word from her would have cleared her mistress's good name.

It is not obvious why Shakespeare, unlike the writer

of *The Partiall Law*, should have omitted from the stage the momentous episode outside Hero's chamber-window. It would have made an effective scene, and one well suited to the arrangements of the Elizabethan theatre. But Borachio's rambling account of the affair to Conrade (III. iii. 153 ff.) is thoroughly in the spirit of the comedy, adding another to the overheard and misunderstood conversations of which it is full. Shakespeare seems also to have purposely refrained from bringing on the stage an episode which would have diverted part of the interest which he focuses on the situation in the church, where Claudio throws Hero back with contumely into her father's arms. This is the central scene of the play, and Shakespeare's art here works at its highest energy. The clash of emotions kindles the verse into a sustained glow. There is rapid and tumultuous action, but no confusion. Each of the leading personages in the bridal throng plays his or her distinctive part. In the twinkling of an eye the joy of nuptial is transformed into tragic sorrow and shame. The theatrical effect is overwhelming. The repudiation of the innocent Hero in the face of the congregation, and before the altar itself, is the *ne plus ultra* of ' much ado about nothing '.

But Shakespeare has to pay a price for this *coup de théâtre* in the complete estrangement of our sympathies from Claudio. Ariosto's knight had been so heart-broken by the apparent faithlessness of Genevra that he had all but taken his own life. Bandello's courtier had sent his renunciation of Fenicia's love through a friend who bewails that he is the bearer of so grievous a message.

Claudio not only rejects Hero publicly, but rains upon her epithets as vile as those that fall from the lips of Othello when maddened by Iago's poison. The Moor is consumed in the fires of his own passion; the count foams into a repellent outburst of self-righteous indignation.

Leonato also shows to less advantage than in the novel, where he never for a moment doubts his daughter's innocence, and declares his trust that 'God the Just Judge will one day make known the truth'. In the play he readily credits the charges against her, and works himself into a paroxysm of rage over her senseless form. So uncontrollable is his passion even after he has left the church that his brother, Antonio, warns him (v. i. 1):

> If you go on thus, you will kill yourself.

But when Claudio reappears (v. i. 46) it is the turn of Antonio to boil over in almost incoherent wrath, which Leonato vainly tries to stem. The spirit of the play has taken possession of the two greybeards, whose frantic outbursts prolong and intensify the 'much ado about nothing' occasioned by the slanderous charge against Hero.

Leonato's belief in her guilt necessitates a departure from the novel, where it is the father himself who proposes, after the girl's recovery from her seeming death, that she should be removed to his brother's house, and married later under another name. In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Leonato, who in his anguish has prayed for her death, is with difficulty persuaded by the sagacious friar

to 'let her awhile be secretly kept in' till Claudio is overcome by remorse.

In either case, time is above all necessary to make the sequel plausible. Shakespeare is here at a disadvantage compared with Bandello, who lets a year pass before reuniting the lovers. In *Much Ado about Nothing*, on the contrary, the action is throughout at top speed. It is true that Borachio's confession in Claudio's hearing of the imposture that has been practised (v. i. 241 ff.) gives the cue for the count's complete change of front:

> Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
> In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

But he does nothing to regain our forfeited sympathy. Don Timbreo, in the novel, magnanimously pardons the rival who has wronged him, and is eager to restore the fair fame of his slandered mistress. 'Else meseemeth I should without cease have her angry shade before mine eyes, still crying sore to God for vengeance against me.' Even after a year, when he has just wedded (as he thinks) another beautiful bride, he proclaims his undying love for Fenicia. But Claudio is satisfied with carrying out the mild penance imposed by Leonato of hanging an epitaph, with music and funeral ceremonial, upon Hero's cenotaph —another sombre instance of 'much ado about nothing'. On the morrow he is ready, without a further thought for the maiden he has wronged, to wed her cousin, 'were she an Ethiope', and he can even, while waiting for her to appear, light-heartedly banter Benedick. And when the bride, unmasking, is seen to be no other than 'the

former Hero ', he is merely dumb, though words are not with him, as with Don Timbreo, choked back by tears. Nor does Hero, truth to tell, seem to feel that there is aught that needs expiation on his part.

An Elizabethan audience, not over-anxious for an unduly prolonged fifth act, doubtless made little of all this. Nor did it know or care that the chivalrous figures of Ariodante and Genevra are scarcely more recognizable in Claudio and Hero than the Homeric heroes in their unworthy counterfeits in *Troilus and Cressida*. Even as compared with Bandello, Shakespeare had sacrificed sympathetic portraiture to the elaboration of a series of variations ranging from the trivial to the tragic, on the theme of ' much ado about nothing '.

IV

The truth is that the Claudio-Hero plot, while it gave scope to Shakespeare's ingenuity and his ' sense of the theatre ', did not rouse his vital interest. The entanglements contained in it, though dramatically effective, are accidental and superficial. They are the outcome of the whimsicality or malice of fortune ; they have no deep root in human nature.

It is one of Shakespeare's crowning achievements in comedy to have interwoven this plot with another in which the ' much ado about nothing ' has its source in the permanent relations between man and woman. There is no more enduring ' make-believe ' than the profession by either sex of its hostility to the union

between them which is essential to the perpetuation of the human race. Hence it is beside the mark to look for the origin of the Benedick-Beatrice plot, as we have done with the Claudio-Hero plot, in earlier poems, novels, or plays. Nature herself has supplied the material.[1]

Shakespeare's concern with the duel of sex dates from the beginning of his career as a playwright. In *Love's Labour's Lost* he showed the collapse of the scheme devised by the King of France and his lords to turn the court into a little 'academe', and to forswear the company of women. Though the technique is immature, and there is more of lyrical than of dramatic achievement in the comedy, it retains its interest as Shakespeare's youthful attempt to handle one aspect of the war of the sexes—the revolt of man against woman.

The obverse aspect of the conflict had already found expression in English dramatic literature. The revolt of woman in its crudest form—the attempt of the wife to seize the household reins—had produced the Noah's wife

[1] This, of course, does not imply that Shakespeare may not have borrowed hints for his dialogue from popular contemporary works. Two that have been suggested are the English version of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (*The Courtier*) and Greene's *Farewell to Folly*. Jacob Ayrer's play, *Die schöne Phoenicia*, is almost certainly, as Furness has shown (Preface to New Variorum edition of *Much Ado about Nothing*, pp. xxix–xxxi), based on Belleforest's version of Bandello's novel, whilst the clown Jahn and the lady's maid Anna Maria in the comic sub-plot are in no way parallel to Benedick and Beatrice. Ayrer's play is, however, in itself of real interest. It is translated in verse in Cohn's *Shakespeare in Germany*, and in prose (in summarized form) in an appendix to Furness's edition of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

of the Chester miracle plays, Strife in *Tom Tiler*, and Tyb in *Johan Johan*. The remedy of the aggrieved husband was the cudgel; nor was this drastic cure approved only by popular playwrights and satirists, and those for whom they catered. Grave Oxford doctors of law like William Gager and Thomas Gwin maintained in Latin poems or theses that it was lawful for husbands to beat their wives.

Thus it has to be remembered that the relation of the sexes during the Tudor period was determined largely by superiority of physical force. But the flood of new influences that came in with the Renaissance, and the long reign of a Maiden Queen, raised the problem of woman's position in unprecedented ways. Spenser, in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* (Cantos v and vii), pictures an Amazonian 'commonweale' in which brave knights are employed in 'spinning and carding all in comely rew', till Britomart, herself the noblest type of militant womanhood,

> The liberty of women did repeale,
> Which they had long usurpt; and them restoring
> To mens subjection, did true Justice deale.

More 'advanced' thinkers like William Heale, of Exeter College, Oxford, maintained that woman was the equal, if not the superior, of man. In his *Apologie for Women* (1609) he asserted that 'if any might challendge preheminence it should seeme the woman might, whose complexion is purer, which argues a richer wit; whose passions are weaker, which pretend a more virtuous

disposition. We . . . are the monuments of [nature's] rougher workmanship.'

The higher level to which the problem had been raised is reflected in the drama of the closing years of the sixteenth century. In the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew* (1596), though Ferando brings Kate to subjection 'with curbs of hunger . . . and want of sleep', he does not lift his hand against her, and we feel that his harsh usage is merely a grimly humorous method of reforming a wife whom he really loves. At the end of the comedy woman's subordination to man is based upon the principle of order, whereby 'the great Commander of the world' made all things 'stand in perfect course'. When Shakespeare adapted the play in *The Taming of the Shrew* he left his audience in no doubt that, however drastic are Petruchio's measures with his wife, 'all is done in reverent care of her'. But the later dramatist declares the sovereignty of the husband in more explicit terms than his forerunner, and bases it mainly on the physical fact that women's bodies are unfit for the toils whereby men maintain them.

It must be confessed that neither this doctrinaire solution nor the general handling of the situation in *The Taming of the Shrew* prepares us for the atmosphere or the technique of *Much Ado about Nothing*. We suddenly pass from primitive domestic relationships into a cultured and self-conscious society, and from vigorous, but unpolished, workmanship into the region of mellow and rounded art. The action of the Benedick-Beatrice plot is not dominated by some theory of the relation of the sexes or of love and intellect, that can be formulated in

a speech from the lips of a Kate or a Biron. It springs out of the characters of the two protagonists themselves. It is noteworthy that there should be two of them. Where *Much Ado about Nothing* differs from earlier English plays of a kindred type is that it does not deal with the taming or schooling of a rebel or rebels belonging to one sex only. Here the duel is between a man and a woman on equal terms, and the result is not the victory of one over the other, but the defeat of both by a fundamental principle of life—a defeat which does not discredit but ennobles them.

Only in the golden period of his comic art could Shakespeare have handled this theme with such buoyancy, geniality, and penetrating vision. It was essential to the sustained interest of the plot that the duellists, though equally matched, should be finely discriminated. As is the rule in Shakespearian comedy, the woman shows to the greater advantage. Beatrice has beauty, intellect, a naturally gay temper, and abundant personal popularity. It is even hinted (and here Shakespeare may possibly be referring to an episode in some lost source of the plot) that her loudly proclaimed hostility to marriage is due to Benedick having once won her heart 'with false dice' (II. i. 299). This may well be, for Beatrice is naturally ardent and loyal, and her rebellious attitude would be explained by an earlier wound to her affections. But having begun her campaign against matrimony she urges it on ruthlessly. 'She speaks poniards and every word stabs.' She is far defter and readier in the use of these verbal weapons than Benedick, and she easily routs

him in every encounter. But her victories are truly Pyrrhic. Their result is only to drive him farther away from her, not (as in her inmost soul she desires) to bring him to her feet.

For Benedick's pose of being 'a professed tyrant' to the female sex springs mainly from the vanity which is the weakness of an otherwise finely-tempered nature, 'stuffed with all honourable virtues'. Sensitive, like a true Renaissance gallant, to beauty and grace, he has a swift eye for feminine charms, but piques himself upon being proof against them. His recurring defeats in the 'merry war' between himself and Beatrice only make him more determined not to suffer the crowning humiliation of becoming her captive. He is shrewd enough to realize that safety is to be found only in flight, and he uses his gifts of declamation, wherein he excels Beatrice as much as she outdoes him in repartee, to safeguard his retreat. As pictured by him she is a Harpy, or the infernal Até in good apparel, or a new and harsher Omphale who would have set Hercules not to spin but to turn spit.

No wonder that when the breach between the pair is seemingly irreparable, Don Pedro is tempted to intervene in his favourite rôle of matchmaker, and to 'undertake one of Hercules' labours; which is to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, th' one with th' other' (II. i. 391 ff.). But when he goes on to assert, 'if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods', he is claiming for himself and his fellow conspirators more than is their due. The scenes in which

Benedick and Beatrice, hidden in the arbour, overhear the dialogues which are supposed to effect their conversion, are suggested by the arrangements of the Elizabethan theatre. On the modern stage, though their charm and gaiety 'get over the footlights', their artificiality is revealed. The ease with which two such acute intelligences are duped is manifestly a piece of theatrical convention. Don Pedro and his confederates owe their success not to their own cleverness but to the fact that Nature is their ally. Benedick and Beatrice have been engaged in an elaborate game of 'much ado about nothing', a petulant make-believe which has only half deceived themselves.

And now Fate seconds Nature in bringing this make-believe once for all to an end. Even after Benedick and Beatrice have confessed their true feelings in soliloquy, and have become the mark for their friends' raillery on their outward transformation, an external crisis is necessary to bring about their final act of self surrender in the mutual avowal of their love. By one of Shakespeare's master-strokes of art this avowal springs directly out of Claudio's public repudiation of his bride. The keen-sighted pair, who had let themselves be so easily trapped when they themselves were concerned, leap with a sure instinct to the conviction that Hero is the victim of a plot. Their common championship of the innocent girl, and Beatrice's impassioned appeal for a man to avenge her cousin, give Benedick the cue for confessing his love and claiming that it is returned. Beatrice does not say him nay. She, who had so lately been protesting that it would

'grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust', now realizes that there are crises in which the masculine clay, whatever its imperfections, is indispensable—in which her own sex, isolated, can accomplish nothing. 'I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving' (IV. i. 331–2). When Beatrice utters these words she finally hauls down her flag and admits defeat. But it is a defeat that secures her the triumph which her dialectical victories had gone nigh to make impossible. Benedick proclaims to the world how completely she has enslaved him, when he undertakes for her sake to kill his 'sworn brother' Claudio. Borachio's confession comes in time to clear the air and prevent the encounter. But Hero's sufferings have not been in vain. Had it not been for them, Benedick might never have been 'the married man', and Beatrice might have been doomed to 'lead apes in hell'.

At the very last they make a feint of drawing back, and of only taking each other 'for pity' or 'upon great persuasion'. But this is nothing more than a final case of 'much ado about nothing'. Their surrender when it comes is absolute. For unlike Millamant in Congreve's *Way of the World*, who in beauty, wit, and tempestuous charm is closely akin to her, Beatrice has nothing of the coquette in her nature.[1] It is impossible to think of her making such matrimonial 'conditions' with her lover as Millamant does with Mirabell in Act IV, Scene V, of Congreve's comedy, when she ends with the grudging

[1] George Meredith in his *Essay on Comedy*, p. 35, describes *The Way of the World* as 'The Conquest of a Town Coquette'.

concession, 'These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer I may by degrees dwindle into a wife'. And Benedick is the last man to lay down 'provisos', which admitted, he may prove 'a tractable and complying husband'. The Shakespearian lovers are too sure of their own and each other's hearts to stand upon terms in this fashion.

A closer kinship may be suggested between Beatrice and Benedick and the two protagonists of a brilliant comedy of our own day, *Man and Superman*. Ann Whitefield is introduced in words that are equally true of Beatrice: 'Vitality is as common as humanity, but like humanity it sometimes rises to genius, and Ann is one of the vital geniuses.' With her father dead, and her mother a nonentity, she is as independent as is Leonato's niece. She has even some of Beatrice's tricks of speech. Such nicknames as 'Signor Montanto' and 'Count Comfect' have their counterparts in 'Jack the Giant-Killer' and 'Ricky-Ticky Tavy'. She cannot leave Tanner alone because, like Beatrice, she is instinctively attracted by the most forcible personality in her circle, the rebel, the free-lance. Her tactics, however, differ completely from those of her Elizabethan forerunner. She seeks to capture Tanner not by a frontal attack but by an irresistible enveloping movement.

Tanner's tactics are much closer to those of Benedick. They are a combination of truculent defiance and astute retreat. Benedick's diatribes against marriage become in the jargon of Shavian sociological rage, 'Marriage is to me an apostasy, profanation of the sanctuary of my soul,

violation of my manhood, sale of my birthright, shameful surrender, ignominious capitulation, acceptance of defeat'. And as Benedick after his surrender seeks to stave off his friends' satire by declaring that 'a college of witcrackers cannot flout me out of my humour', so Tanner characteristically defends himself against their congratulations, 'I solemnly say that I am not a happy man'.

Even the Shavian conception of the 'life-force' whereof individuals are merely the instruments has a light-hearted anticipation in Benedick's jest, 'the world must be peopled', and is implicit in the idea underlying the Benedick-Beatrice plot that the pair are fighting against nature.

The analogy must not be unduly pressed. It is a far cry from Elizabethan spontaneity to twentieth-century self-consciousness, from the Shakespearian to the Shavian technique and spirit. But the student of the dramatic handling of sex relations will learn much from a comparison between the two plays.

V

The Claudio-Hero and Benedick-Beatrice plots would together have amply sufficed for a play of varied interest but Shakespeare had to take into account other than dramatic considerations. He had to provide parts for all the leading members of the Lord Chamberlain's company, and neither of these plots gave a chance to the 'low' comedians. There would have been trouble in the 'cry of players' and with the audience had a new

comedy been staged at the Globe without rôles for Will Kemp and Dick Cowley. A fortunate accident reminds us of this fact, should we be in danger of forgetting it. In Act IV, Scene ii of *Much Ado about Nothing*, both the Quarto and the Folio prefix the names of Kemp and Cowley to the speeches of Dogberry and Verges. We are thus, as it were, enabled to hear the very accents of two of Shakespeare's fellow players in parts created by them. Kemp doubtless found the rich and unctuous humour of Dogberry more congenial to his talents than the thin banter of Peter in *Romeo and Juliet*. This was evidently another of his parts, for in Act IV of the tragedy Quartos 2 and 3 have 'Enter Will Kempe', where the Folio substitutes 'Enter Peter'. When Kemp left the Lord Chamberlain's company he was succeeded in the part of Dogberry by Robert Armin, who in 1609 jestingly speaks of himself as having 'been writ downe for an Asse in his time'. Like Armin, the 'Jack Wilson' whom the Folio mentions in Act II, Scene iii as taking the part of Balthasar, does not seem to have been the original performer.[1]

[1] This Jack Wilson was probably 'mr. Willson ye singer', who dined with Edward Alleyn on the anniversary of his wedding, October 22, 1620 (*Alleyn's Diary* in Young's *History of Dulwich College*, ii. 192), and who on October 21, 1622, was recommended to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen by Lord Mandeville for the place of one of the servants of the City for music and voice (*Remembrancia*, viii. 48, 121). Dr. Rimbault has contended in 'Who was Jack Wilson?' (*Shak. Soc. Papers*, 1845, vol. ii, p. 33) that he was the John Wilson (1595–1674) who in 1635 became one of the king's musicians, on

Even when providing parts for the low comedians and the musicians of his company, Shakespeare kept steadily before him the dominant idea of the play. In his apologetic words before singing, Balthasar makes 'much ado about nothing', while Dogberry and Verges and their henchmen express it in their every utterance and action. The bane of petty officialdom has always been pompous futility, and the extension of local government under the Tudors gave special scope for its display. Not but that there were two sides to the picture. Earlier in the century the clear-eyed author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* had shown how the sagacity and tolerance of 'the Baily' could quiet the tumult in a village community. Shakespeare himself must have seen local officials of all grades and types. His father had been Bailiff of Stratford, and when on tour with his company the dramatist was brought into contact frequently with civic authorities, before whom opening performances

March 10, 1644/5 graduated as Doctor of Music at Oxford, and in 1656 became Professor of Music at Oxford. This Dr. John Wilson had composed the music for *The Maske of Flowers*, presented by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn on Twelfth Night, 1613/4, in honour of the marriage of the Earl of Somerset (Groves, *Dict. of Music*, ed. Maitland, v. 529–30). He also composed settings of two of Shakespeare's songs, 'Take, O take those lips away', in *Measure for Measure*, and 'Lawn as white as driven snow', in *The Winter's Tale*. He was thus evidently interested in the drama, but the attitude of the university authorities in the earlier seventeenth century was so hostile to the class of professional entertainers that it is improbable that one of them should have been elected to the Professorship of Music in Oxford.

were generally given. If Aubrey is to be believed—and despite an evident confusion between *Much Ado about Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he is relating a well-authenticated tradition—Shakespeare drew Dogberry from a living model: 'The Humour of the Constable in *A Midsomer-Night's Dreame* he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks, w^ch^ is the roade from London to Stratford, and there was living that Constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon. Mr. Jos. Howe is of y^t^ parish, and knew him.'[1]

Whatever be the truth of this, the Dogberry-Verges sub-plot, in addition to its technical dramatic interest, is specially important as Shakespeare's most elaborate study of local officialdom. This aspect has been partly obscured in modern editions by the substitution of personal names for titles. Thus in Act III, Scene v, where the conventional opening stage-direction is 'Enter Leonato with Dogberry and Verges', the Quarto and Folio have 'Enter Leonato, and the Constable and the Headborough'. These titles are prefixed to their speeches throughout the scene, and in later scenes they are both introduced as constables. It is important, therefore, to realize that the office of 'Petty Constable', which its representatives in *Much Ado about Nothing* make immortally ridiculous, was in itself both ancient and important. 'Down to the latter part of the sixteenth century it is

[1] Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark, ii. 226. This Josias Howe, born about 1611, was the son of the Rector of Grendon. His testimony is thus of value, especially as he was keenly interested in poetry and the drama.

to the Constable . . . that Parliament entrusts the supervision of beggars, the lodging of the impotent poor, the apprenticing of children, and the general superintendence of the civil economy of the town or village. . . . The Constable, unlike the other officers, was by common law a " Conservator of the Peace ", and was authorized, not only to apprehend any person who had committed a felony, but also, if he saw any minor offence committed or even a breach of the peace about to take place, to apprehend the offender, and put him in the stocks for safe custody, or detain him in the cage where one existed, or in his house, until he could bring him before a magistrate. Thus of all these local officers it was the Constable who was brought into the closest contact with the personal rights and liberties of the inhabitants. His staff of office, sometimes affixed to the door of his house, was a symbol of real authority.' [1]

Thus, when Dogberry plumes himself upon being ' the prince's officer ', and cries to Conrade, ' Dost thou not suspect my place ? ' he makes himself absurd, not because his place (as more modern associations would suggest) was unimportant, but because he was so ill fitted for it by his pretentious ineptitude.

There is another office-bearer in the play who presents a curious problem. At the beginning of Act IV, Scene ii, the constables enter, according to the stage-direction in the Quarto and the Folio, with the town-clerk. But in l. 2 Verges calls for a stool and cushion for the sexton,

[1] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government : the Parish and the County,* pp. 26–7.

who thereupon asks, 'Which be the malefactors?' and throughout the scene advises 'master constable' upon points of procedure. This is what might be expected of a town-clerk, but not of a sexton, who sometimes filled other minor offices, but none of so dignified a character. Can it possibly be that Verges in his blundering fashion calls the town-clerk a sexton, that Dogberry echoes him, and that the printer caught the infection, and prefixed the humbler title to the clerk's speeches?

However this may be, Shakespeare, in the sub-plot of *Much Ado about Nothing*, does not merely pillory blundering officialdom, or introduce incidentally the humours of a watch, as Lyly had done in *Endimion* (IV. ii). With consummate art he uses the muddle-headed incompetence of Dogberry and Verges, and their subordinates, both to heighten, and to relieve, the poignancy of the wellnigh tragic scene of the repudiation of Hero. In previous versions of the story the plot against the lovers is not brought to light till some time after their separation. But in *Much Ado about Nothing* the watch on the wedding-eve overhears Borachio's confession to Conrade; they arrest the pair and call up Dogberry and Verges, who wait upon Leonato just as he is starting for the church (III. v). Were the constables only able to tell a plain tale, they could avert the whole catastrophe. But in spite of Leonato's repeated appeals to them to come to the point, they are so intolerably long-winded that he has to hurry away, leaving the examination of the prisoners in their hands. And the crowning touch of dramatic irony is that he himself delays further the full disclosure of the plot by inviting

the two functionaries to drink some wine before they leave his house. Thus at the very moment when the crushing blow is falling on Hero, the precious pair who might have averted it are making merry under her father's roof. Even when the examination does take place, Dogberry's inexhaustible genius for following will-o'-the-wisps makes further trouble till the sagacious Francis Seacoal gets the inquiry back on business lines. Then at last the whole truth is brought to light, an encounter between Benedick and Claudio averted, and Hero's good name restored. Thus by means of the sub-plot Shakespeare at once heightens the dramatic effectiveness of the catastrophe in Act IV, and solves the difficult technical problem (which neither Ariosto nor Bandello had to face) of unloosing the entanglement within the brief limits to which the action of the play is confined.

VI

For it is one of the triumphs of Shakespeare's comic genius to have fused the plots analysed above into a harmonious whole that has the concentration and balance typical of classical art. The unity of place is virtually observed in the play, for all the scenes are laid in Messina, and with a few exceptions in Leonato's house or its precincts. There is similar economy in the treatment of time. The action altogether covers the period from a Monday to the Tuesday in the following week. In the middle of this period, however, there seems to be a blank, the episodes in Acts I and II. i and ii falling on

the Monday, and those in II. iii to the close on the following Saturday to Tuesday. In scarcely any other play has Shakespeare been at such pains to furnish precise indications of time.

But the unity of impression left by the play is not due merely to its compact structure, nor even to the fact that, as has been shown, it is a series of variations upon the theme of 'much ado about nothing'. It is the quality of the style sustained throughout the various scenes that goes far to give the comedy its distinctive place.

The proportion of verse to prose is smaller in *Much Ado about Nothing* than in any Shakespearian play of kindred type. Nor except in the church scene is this verse winged for lofty poetic flight. It serves to express emotion heightened to a pitch where prose is inadequate to its full interpretation, but where verse can retain much of the accent and phrasing of familiar talk, as in Scott's Introductions to the Cantos of *Marmion* or some of Shelley's poetical *Letters*. Hence we are conscious of no abrupt change in passing from the verse dialogue in *Much Ado about Nothing* to the prose, and the prose itself has an unmistakable hall-mark. It is Elizabethan court speech transfigured by the dramatist's art. Not that it is entirely free from alloy, from the euphuistic infection of mechanical alliterative balance, and the obsession of punning. And these frailties (as reference to the Notes will abundantly show) are common to the speech of nearly every character in the play. But when they have been taken fully into account, how irresistible are the charm and distinction of the dialogue. How deft

and sure is the dramatist's handling of varieties of speech —the lightning sallies of Beatrice, the slower-paced and more heavily freighted harangues of Benedick, the sombre bluntness of Don John, the light-hearted gabble of the waiting-women, the grotesque floundering of the constables in a sea of 'dictionary-terms'. In the flexibility, poise, and sparkle of its prose *Much Ado about Nothing* is the flower of Elizabethan familiar speech. *The Way of the World* and *The School for Scandal* are herein, each for its own day, its lineal successors. Modern English comedy, though rich in achievement in other ways, has never recaptured the secret of that perfect prose dialogue.

Though from the publication of the Quarto in 1600 no separate edition of *Much Ado about Nothing* was called for till 1734, there is abundant evidence of its popularity. It was one of the plays acted in honour of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine in the spring of 1613. Thomas Heywood in *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607), Thomas May in *The Heir* (1620), Henry Glapthorne in *Wit in a Constable* (1640), were amongst those who imitated the humours of Dogberry and the watch. Burton, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (3rd edition, 1628), borrows an illustration from the behaviour of 'Benedict and Betteris in the comedy', and Leonard Digges in his lines prefixed to Shakespeare's Poems (1640) declares,

> let but *Beatrice*
> And *Benedicke* be seene, loe in a trice
> The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes all are full.

Dryden in his *All for Love* (1678) makes Ventidius denounce Cleopatra to Antony in words borrowed from Don John's slander against Hero :

Ant. Not Cleopatra ?
Ven. Even she, my Lord.
Ant. My Cleopatra.
Ven. Your Cleopatra : Dolabella's Cleopatra : Every-man's Cleopatra.

This is merely an incidental passage in a play suggested by Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Ten years previously Davenant had made a tasteless but ingenious 'contamination' of the Benedick and Beatrice plot of *Much Ado about Nothing* and the main plot of *Measure for Measure*, which was acted with much success at the Duke of York's Theatre. The eighteenth-century adapter of the play, James Miller, in his *The Universal Passion*, acted at Drury Lane in 1736, was chiefly concerned with the Claudio-Hero plot, which he strangely transformed and blended with Molière's *Princess of Elis*.

Two years before, in 1734, *Much Ado about Nothing* was for the first time republished separately since 1600 by Jacob Tonson. In 1735 Robert Walker issued another edition. The first Scottish edition was published in Edinburgh in 1754.

During the same period the play, in its Shakespearian form, began to gain a new lease of popularity on the stage. It was acted several times in the latter part of 1737. In 1748 Garrick appeared as Benedick, which was considered by many leading critics to be his best comic character. Among his most notable successors in the

part have been Macready and Irving, while the rôle of Beatrice, created by some 'squeaking' boy, has been the delight of the greatest English actresses from Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Clive to Helen Faucit and Ellen Terry. The Shakespearian production in this Tercentenary year will be incomplete if they do not include a revival of this golden comedy which saluted the dawn of the seventeenth century, and confronts the twentieth with the serene gaze of immortal youth.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

On August 4, 1600, an entry was made in the Register of the Stationers' Company that four plays, belonging to the Lord Chamberlain's men, *As You Like It, Henry V, Every Man in his Humour, and* '*the commedie of muche Adoo about nothing*', were 'to be staied'. Application had evidently been made for licence to publish them, and for some unknown reason it was refused. But *Much Ado about Nothing* was not long 'staied', for on August 24 it was re-entered, together with *2 Henry IV*, by Andrew Wise and William Aspley, and was soon afterwards issued in Quarto. As the title-page stated that the play had been 'sundrie times publikely acted' by the Lord Chamberlain's servants, it must have been written some time before its publication. On the other hand, it is not mentioned by Meres in his list of Shakespeare's plays in 1598. It probably followed *Henry V*, and dates from the summer or autumn of 1599.

Whatever may have been the provenance of the manuscript from which Aspley and Wise printed the Quarto—and there is good reason to believe that it was a play-house copy [1]—they were fortunate in securing a remarkably accurate text. The more carefully it is studied, the more reason will be found for doing honour to it, 'on this side idolatry'. Even Heminges and Condell, who in their preface to the first Folio (1623) speak so scornfully of earlier editions of the plays as 'stolne and surreptitious copies', were content in the case of *Much Ado about Nothing* to reproduce the Quarto text, with the minimum of change, which in nearly every case is for the worse.

Hence the present edition follows *Q*, except where there is a statement to the contrary. This has involved in a few passages, for reasons set forth in the notes *ad loc.*, a departure

[1] See notes on IV. ii. 1–2.

from generally accepted emendations. In III. iii. 86 the 'statutes' of *Q* (to which *F* 2, 3, and 4 revert) has been retained instead of the 'statues' of *F*, though one surrenders such an inspired misprint with a pang. Other places in which the reading of *Q* has been restored are I. i. 102 ('are you'); III. i. 58 ('she'll'); IV. i. 307 ('a'); IV. i. 327 ('curtsies').

In other passages, with a minimum of repunctuation or rearrangement, *Q* will give a satisfactory reading. Thus in the speech beginning IV. i. 157 there is no need to suppose that there is a *lacuna*. In IV. ii. 73–5, instead of the generally received emendation distributing the lines between Dogberry, Verges, and Conrade, they have been divided between Dogberry and Conrade. This arrangement keeps the original number of speakers and adds (as the note *ad loc.* shows) to the dramatic propriety of Conrade's exclamation.[1]

The punctuation of *Q* has been restored in I. i. 64 and II. i. 277. On the other hand, it has not been kept in III. iv. 20 and IV. i. 58. Even the best manuscripts and texts are liable to errors in the prefixes to speeches, and there are some half-dozen cases in which *Q* appears to be wrong, and where the generally received emendations have been adopted. But in several of these case (see notes *ad loc.*) the reading of *Q*, though not plausible, is possible.

Apart from wrong prefixes and imperfect marking of entrances and exits, there remain few passages where *Q* needs correction, and even here only of single words. Three of these, curiously enough, occur in one short scene, I. ii, where 'euents' (l. 8) should probably be 'event'; 'mine' (l. 11) should be 'the'; and 'Cousins' (l. 28) should be 'Cousin'. In II. iii. 154, 'of us' should be 'us of'; III. ii. 29 'cannot' should be 'can'; and V. iii. 10, 'dead' should be 'dumb'. Other apparent mistakes in *Q* are in II. iii. 47, 'kid-foxe' for 'hid-foxe'; III. i. 45, 'as full' for 'at full'; III. ii. 63, 'now crept' for 'new crept'; III. iv. 48, 'Ye' for 'Yea'; IV. i. 199, 'kind' for 'curse' [?] (see note); IV. i. 204, 'Princesse' for 'princes'; V. i. 16, 'And' for 'Bid'.

F transposes the words in II. iii. 154, and aided by the rhyme

[1] The emendation of 'bands' for 'hands' in l. 74 has been adopted, but it is admittedly conjectural.

corrects v. iii. 10. Otherwise it either reproduces *Q*,[1] except in spelling or punctuation, or substitutes an inferior reading. Most of the changes are slight, including the frequent 'substitution of a literary for a colloquial form in spelling or syntax', but in nearly every case there is a sacrifice of liveliness and aptness.

F also omits several passages in *Q*. Three of these, in I. i. 330–1, IV. i. 20–1, and V. iv. 63, are probably merely printers' errors. The omission of IV. ii. 20–3, in which the name of God occurs four times, was doubtless due to the Statute 3 James I, c. 21, enacting penalties against 'the great Abuse of the Holy Name of God in Stage-plays, Enterludes, May-games, Shews and such like'.

The most important omission is III. ii. 35–8, 'or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet'. It is known that *Much Ado about Nothing* was one of the plays performed at the wedding festivities of the Elector Palatine and the Princess Elizabeth in the spring of 1613. Hence it is probable that it was for this revival that the jesting reference to a German was left out. Heminges, who directed the performances in honour of the marriage, was one of the editors of *F*, and its text of *Much Ado about Nothing* may therefore be supposed to represent that used before the court.

In any case, *F*, unlike *Q*, divided the play into Acts. On the Elizabethan platform-stage, where there was no drop-curtain and the performance was continuous, such a division was often little more than formal. The beginning of Acts II, IV, and V seems to mark the transition from a front-stage to a whole-stage scene, while the division at Act III, though there is no change of scene, separates the parallel episodes of the tricking of Benedick and of Beatrice.

The division into Scenes is the work of eighteenth-century editors, who also considerably elaborated the stage-directions. So far as they confined themselves to piecing out the imperfections of *Q* and *F* in the marking of entrances and exits, they

[1] The close dependence of *F* on *Q* is illustrated in IV. i. 157–60, where in both texts the verse is printed as prose.

rendered a service to students of the play, and such emendations have been utilized in the present edition. The opportunity, however, has been taken to correct some traditional errors, e. g. after II. i. 91, and before the last sentence in II. i. 162 (see note on l. 165).

But the eighteenth-century editors started on a false scent when they sought to localize every scene. They did not realize the difference between the platform and the picture stage. On the former many scenes, especially those acted on the front stage, are vaguely localized. Hence such eighteenth-century headings to a scene as 'A room in Leonato's house', 'Another room in Leonato's house', are often only approximately correct, and are sometimes actually misleading, as suggesting without warrant a change of scene. These traditional headings have been retained in this volume only so far as they seem to be compatible with Elizabethan stage conditions. In two instances (I. i and V. iii) new headings have been adopted. Only a few other stage-directions are included, and it must be borne in mind that they have no Shakespearian authority.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.
DON JOHN, his bastard Brother.
CLAUDIO, a young Lord of Florence.
BENEDICK, a young Lord of Padua.
LEONATO, Governor of Messina.
ANTONIO, his Brother.
BALTHASAR, Servant to Don Pedro.
BORACHIO, CONRADE, } followers of Don John.
DOGBERRY, a Constable.
VERGES, a Headborough.
First Watchman.
Second Watchman.
FRIAR FRANCIS.
A Messenger.
A Sexton.
A Boy.
A Lord.

HERO, Daughter to Leonato.
BEATRICE, Niece to Leonato.
MARGARET, URSULA, } Waiting-gentlewomen attending on Hero.

Musicians, Maskers, Antonio's son, Watchmen, Attendants.

SCENE.—*Messina.*

Dramatis Personae . . . Messina om. Q, F : first added by Rowe : emend. Ed.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

ACT I

SCENE I.—*In* LEONATO'S *Orchard.*

Enter LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE *and Others, with a* Messenger.

Leon. I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

S. D. Enter . . . Messenger *Theobald: Enter Leonato gouernour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, with a messenger Q, F* 1 Pedro] *Peter Q, F: corr. Rowe*

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness. There are no faces truer than those that are so washed: how much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

Beat. I pray you is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady: there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O! he 's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

45 bird-bolt *Theobald: spelt* Burbolt *Q, F*

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man; but for the stuffing well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there 's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one! so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is 't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

55 victuall *F*: *spelt* vittaile, *Q*

Beat. No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord! he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio, Benedick, Balthasar, *and Others.*

D. Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble? The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace, for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

85 an *Theobald*: *spelt* and *Q, F. So passim* 96 a' *Camb. edd.*: a *Q*: he *F* 99 You will neuer *Q*: You'l ne're *F* 102–3 are you . . . trouble ?] are you . . . trouble: *Q*: you are . . . trouble: *F. See note*

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it in full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

Bene. What! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

110 sir *om. F*

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind; so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, a God's name; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

D. Pedro. That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [*To* DON JOHN.] Let me bid you welcome, my lord; being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

D. John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your Grace lead on?

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together. [*Exeunt all but* BENEDICK *and* CLAUDIO.

152 yours] your *F* 155 a *Q, F*: i' *Capell*: o' *Theobald* 158 That is the sum of all, Leonato.] That is the summe of all: Leonato, *Q*: This is the summe of all: *Leonato, F*: *corr. Collier. See note* 166–8 forsworn ... Let ... my lord; being ... brother, I] forsworne, let ... my lord, being ... brother: I *Q, F*: *corr. Hanmer*

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgement; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No; I pray thee speak in sober judgement.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she 's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow, or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter: there 's her cousin an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the

last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn to the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is 't come to this, in faith? Hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look! Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro.

D. Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio. I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so, but (on my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance) he is in love. With who? now that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is:—with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

D. Pedro. If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: 'it is not

213 Is 't come to this, in faith? Hath] Ist come to this? in faith hath *Q, F*: *corr. Pope* *S. D. Re-enter* Don Pedro] *Enter don Pedro, Iohn the bastard Q, F*: *corr. Hanmer* 226 Claudio] Claudio, *Q, F* (*Claudio*): *corr. Ed. after Furness* 228–9 so, but (on my . . . my allegiance) he] so (but on my . . . my allegiance) he *Q, F*: *corr. Ed. See note* 233 *Don Pedro conj. Hudson*: *Claudio Q, F*

so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.'

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

D. Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me: I will die in it at the stake.

D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is,—for the which I may go the finer,—I will live a bachelor.

D. Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

246 spoke] speake *F*

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up . . . for the sign of blind Cupid.

D. Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam.

D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try:

'In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.'

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead; and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write, 'Here is good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign 'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

D. Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the meantine, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's: commend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you—

284 vilely *Rowe*: *spelt* vildly *Q, F*

Claud. To the tuition of God: from my house, if I had it,—

D. Pedro. The sixth of July: your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience: and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

D. Pedro. My love is thine to teach: teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

D. Pedro. No child but Hero; she 's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O! my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her, and with her father,

330–1 and with . . . have her *om. F*

And thou shalt have her. Was 't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lov'st,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then, after to her father will I break;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—*A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Leon. How now, brother! Where is my cousin, your son? Hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them: but they

333 you do] doe you *F* *S. D. Enter Leonato and an old man, brother to Leonato Q, F* 5 strange *om. F* 8 event *Rowe*: euents *Q, F. See note*

have a good cover; they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in the orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and, if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow: I will send for him; and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you, and tell her of it. [*Enter* Antonio's *son, with a* musician.] Cousin, you know what you have to do. O! I cry you mercy, friend; go you with me, and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—*The same.*

Enter Don John *and* Conrade.

Con. What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

D. John. There is no measure in the occasion

11 the *corr. Ed.*: mine *Q*: my *F*. *See note* 13 much *om. F* 27 *Enter*.. musicians *add. Ed. after Dyce*. *See note* 28 Cousin] Cousins *Q, F*: *corr. Johnson* *S. D. Enter sir Iohn the bastard, and Conrade his companion Q, F*

that breeds; therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

D. John. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

D. John. I wonder that thou, being,—as thou say'st thou art,—born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea; but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

D. John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have

8 brings] bringeth *F* 9 at least] yet *F* 26 true *om. F*

decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

D. John. I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here?

Enter Borachio.

What news, Borachio?

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper: the prince, your brother, is royally entertained by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

D. John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

D. John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

D. John. A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

D. John. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

Bora. Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the prince

43 make] will make *F* 53 brother's] bothers *Q*: brothers *F*
65 me *om. F*

should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

D. John. Come, come; let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

D. John. Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were a my mind! Shall we go prove what 's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II

Scene I.—*A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula *and Others.*

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and

78 a] of *F* *S. D. Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter and Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman Q, F* *See note* 2 *Antonio*] *Brother Q, F*

says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if a' could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith, she 's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns;' but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns?

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leon. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: therefore I will even take

18 a' *Collier*: a *Q*; he *F* 34 on] upon *F*

sixpence in earnest of the bear-herd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into hell?

Beat. No; but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven; here 's no place for you maids:' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. [*To* Hero.] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy, and say, 'Father, as it please you:'—but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, 'Father, as it please me.'

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

43 bear-herd *F3, F4*: *spelt* Berrord *Q, F* 51 Saint . . . heavens] saint Peter: for the heavens, *Q, F* (*S. Peter*): *conj. Pope. See note* 57 curtsy *Wright*: *spelt* cursie *Q*: curtsie *F*. Father *om. F* 66 an *om. F*.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes Repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle: I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother: make good room.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Balthasar, *masked, with* Don John *and* Borachio.

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

D. Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

S. D. Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar, or dumb Iohn Q: Enter . . . Iohn, Maskers with a drum F: corr. Ed. See note. 94 So you *F*: So, you *Q*

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend the lute should be like the case!

D. Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then, your visor should be thatch'd.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love. [*Takes her aside.*

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake; for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better; the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done! Answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words: the clerk is answered.

Urs. I know you well enough: you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here 's his dry hand up and down: you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

102 Jove] Love *F* 104, 107, 110, *Balthasar*] *Benedick Q, F*: *conj. Theobald*

Urs. Come, come; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there 's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales'. Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What 's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet: I would he had boarded me!

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure not marked or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy; and then there 's a partridge

151 pleases] pleaseth *Q*

wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night. We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

[*Dance. Then exeunt all but* Don John, Borachio, *and* Claudio.

D. John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

D. John. Are you not Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well; I am he.

D. John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: he is enamoured on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him from her; she is no equal for his birth: you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

D. John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

D. John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* Don John *and* Borachio.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'Tis certain so; the prince woos for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love:

S. D. Dance . . . Claudio *corr. Theobald*: *Dance. exeunt Q*: *Exeunt. Musicke for the dance F*

Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero!

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, county. What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like a usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that 's spoken like an honest drovier: so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man: 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Bene. Alas! poor hurt fowl. Now will he creep into sedges. But, that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The prince's fool! Ha! it may be I go under that title because I am merry.

200 county] Count *F*

Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong; I am not so reputed: it is the base though bitter disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don Pedro, Hero, *and* Leonato.

D. Pedro. Now, signior, where 's the count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the good will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

D. Pedro. To be whipped! What 's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy, who, being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stolen his bird's nest.

S. D. Re-enter . . . Leonato *Capell*: *Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, Iohn and Borachio, and Conrade Q*: *Enter the Prince F.* *See note* 229 think I told] thinke, told *F* 230 good *om. F* 233 up *om. F*

D. Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

D. Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

Bene. O! she misused me past the endurance of a block: an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her: my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester; that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her; you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose because they would go thither, so indeed all disquiet, horror and perturbation follows her.

259 jester; that] Iester, and that *F*

Re-enter CLAUDIO *and* BEATRICE.

D. Pedro. Look! here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this Harpy. You have no employment for me?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here 's a dish I love not: I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one: marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

D. Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

S. D. Enter . . . Beatrice Q: *Enter . . . Beatrice, Leonato, Hero F*
293 my] this *F* 298 his] a *F*

D. Pedro. How then? Sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

D. Pedro. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won: I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained: name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

313 that] a *F* 319–20 and his . . . obtained:] and his . . . obtained, *Q, F*: *corr. Pope* 325 cue *spelt* Qu *Q, F* 326 herald *spelt* Herault *Q, F* 338 her] my *F*

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner and cry, heigh-ho for a husband!

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days: your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your Grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out a' question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born. Cousins, God give you joy!

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle. By your Grace's pardon. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There 's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps; and not ever sad then, for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

356 a'] a *Q*: of *F*

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O! by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord! my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D. Pedro. County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with th' other. I would fain have it a match; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

382 County] Counte *F* 388 my *om. F* 394–5 th' one . . . th' other] the one with the other *F*

D. Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—*Another Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don John *and* Borachio.

D. John. It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

D. John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

D. John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

D. John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of

the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

D. John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother; spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio—whose estimation do you mightily hold up—to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

D. John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

D. John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid—that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero; hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding: for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be

34 Don] on *F*
37–8 as—in . . . match) *Q, F*
37 in love] in a love *F*
37–8 as—in . . . match *Capell*] (as in . . .

absent; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

D. John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

D. John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.—Leonato's *Orchard.*

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Boy!

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Signior?

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Bene. I know that; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit* Boy.] I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known, when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather

50 truth] truths *F* 56 you] thou *F* *S. D. Enter Benedicke alone Q F*: *S. D. Enter a Boy add. Collier* (1)

hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known, when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that 's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, *and* Claudio.

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?

Claud. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

28 an *F*: and *Q* 37 I *om. F* *S. D. Enter prince, Leonato, Claudio, Musicke Q*: *Enter . . . Claudio and Iacke Wilson F*

D. Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Enter BALTHASAR *with music.*

Claud. O! very well, my lord: the music ended,
We'll fit the hid-fox with a penny-worth.

D. Pedro. Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O. good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing;
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy; yet he woos;
Yet will he swear he loves.

D. Pedro. Nay, pray thee, come;
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes;
There 's not a note of mine that 's worth the noting.

D. Pedro. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks;
Notes, notes, forsooth, and nothing! [*Music.*

Bene. Now, divine air! now is his soul ravished! Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all 's done.

S. D. Enter . . . music om. F 47 hid-fox *corr. Warburton*: kid-foxe *Q, F. See note by mistake ll.* 50–1 51–2 *Between these lines F repeats* 62 [*Music. add. Malone*

THE SONG

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

D. Pedro. Ha, no, no, faith; thou singest well enough for a shift.

Bene. An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him; and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

D. Pedro. Yea, marry; dost thou hear, Balthasar? I pray thee, get us some excellent music, for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

78 was] were *F* 92 liefe *F*: liue *Q*

D. Pedro. Do so: farewell. [*Exit* BALTHASAR.] Come hither, Leonato: what was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. O! ay:—Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits.—I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. Is 't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enraged affection: it is past the infinite of thought.

D. Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. Bait the hook well: this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

D. Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded follow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide itself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No; and swears she never will: that 's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?'

Leon. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet.

Claud. That.

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her: 'I measure him,' says she, 'by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should.'

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls,

154 us of *F*: of us *Q*

weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses ; ' O sweet Benedick ! God give me patience ! '

Leon. She doth indeed ; my daughter says so ; and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometimes afeard she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

D. Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end ? he would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She 's an excellent sweet lady, and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

D. Pedro. In everything but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O ! my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

D. Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me ; I would have daffed all other respects and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you ?

Claud. Hero thinks surely she will die ; for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

177 make but] but make *F* 193 a *Q* : he *F*

D. Pedro. She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man,—as you know all,—hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

D. Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

D. Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Claud. And I take him to be valiant.

D. Pedro. As Hector, I assure you: and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, a' must necessarily keep peace: if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D. Pedro. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that 's impossible: she may wear her heart out first.

D. Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter: let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would

207 Before] 'Fore *F* 211 *Claudio*] *Leonato F* 213 say] see *F* 215 most *om. F* 223 seek] see *F*

modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

D. Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter: that 's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Claudio, *and* Leonato.

Bene. [*Advancing from the arbour.*] This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems, her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair: 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous: 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me: by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love

233 unworthy] vnworthy to haue *F* 240 gentlewoman *F* 250 their] the *F*

with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No; the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior: fare you well.

[*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner,' there's a double meaning in that. 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me,' that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

ACT III

Scene I.—Leonato's *Orchard.*

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursley
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us,
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honey-suckles, ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter; like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it. There will she hide her,
To listen our propose. This is thy office;
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick:
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

S. D. Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret and Ursula Q: F has 'two Gentlemen' 4 Ursley] *Ursula F* 12 propose] purpose *F*

Enter BEATRICE, *behind.*

Now begin ;
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.
Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait :
So angle we for Beatrice ; who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.
Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.
[*They advance to the bower.*
No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful ;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.
Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.
Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam ?
Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it ;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.
Urs. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve at full as fortunate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?
Hero. O god of love ! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man ;

42 wrestle *spelt* wrastle *Q, F* 45 at full *corr. Ed.*: as full *Q, F. See note*

But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice ;
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on, and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.
Urs. Sure, I think so ;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she'll make sport at it.
Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward : if fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister ;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,
Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.
Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.
Hero. No ; not to be so odd and from all fashions
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
But who dare tell her so ? If I should speak,
She would mock me into air : O ! she would laugh me

58 she'll] sheele *Q* : she *F* 63 antique] anticke *F*
65 agate *spelt* agot *Q*, *F*

Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs. Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with. One doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O! do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgement,—
Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is priz'd to have,—as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
When are you married, madam?

Hero. Why, every day to-morrow. Come, go in:
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urs. She 's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt* Hero *and* Ursula.

79 than] to *F*

Beat. [*Advancing.*] What fire is in mine ears?
Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

Scene II.—*A Room in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Leonato.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth: he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him. He hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I: methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant! there 's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: a' brushes his hat a mornings; what should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

29 can] cannot *Q*, *F*: *corr. Pope* 35–8 or in the . . . doublet *om. F* 40 appear] to appeare *F* 43 a': a *Q*: he *F*

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That 's as much as to say the sweet youth 's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is new crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache. Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt* BENEDICK *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret

56 *D. Pedro*] *Prin. F*: *Bene. Q* 63 new crept *corr. Ed.*: now crept *Q, F. See note* 66 Conclude, conclude] Conclude *F*

have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John.

D. John. My lord and brother, God save you!

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

D. John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

D. John. If it please you; yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of concerns him.

D. Pedro. What 's the matter?

D. John. [*To* Claudio.] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

D. Pedro. You know he does.

D. John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

D. John. You may think I love you not: let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearness of heart hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage; surely suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what 's the matter?

D. John. I came hither to tell you; and circumstances shortened,—for she has been too long a talking of,—the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who, Hero?

102–3 brother (I . . . heart) hath *Q, F* 108 has] hath *F*

D. John. Even she: Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

D. John. The word 's too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say, she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her, then to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

D. John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

D. John. I will disparage her no further till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

D. John. O plague right well prevented! So will you say when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*

130 to-morrow, in *conj. Rowe*: to morrow in *Q, F* 137 midnight] night *F*

Scene III.—*A Street.*

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the* Watch.

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

1st Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

2nd Watch. Both which, Master constable,—

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lanthorn. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

Watch. How, if a' will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then, take no note of him, but

S. D. Verges] *his compartner Q, F*

let him go ; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets : for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

2nd Watch. We will rather sleep than talk : we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend ; only have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not ?

Dogb. Why then, let them alone till they are sober : if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

Watch. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man ; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2nd Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him ?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may ; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled.

38 to talk] talk *F* 46 those] them *F*

The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

2nd Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You constable, are to present the prince's own person: if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by 'r lady, that I think, a' cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on 't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By 'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ah, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbour.

2nd Watch. Well, masters, we hear our

86 statutes] statues *F.* *See note*

charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and than all go to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu; be vigitant, I beseech you.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Enter BORACHIO *and* CONRADE.

Bora. What, Conrade!

Watch. [*Aside.*] Peace! stir not.

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [*Aside.*] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

Bora. Thou wouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirmed.

116 Don] Dun *Q*

Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say the fool 's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. [*Aside.*] I know that Deformed; a' has been a vile thief this seven year; a' goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No: 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting; sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window; sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry . . . ?

Con. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so, neither; but know, that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night—

135 year] yeares *F* 144 reechy *spelt* rechie *Q, F*
148 and I see] and see *F*

I tell this tale vilely :—I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master, knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

1st Watch. We charge you in the prince's name, stand!

2nd Watch. Call up the right Master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

1st Watch. And one Deformed is one of them: I know him, a' wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters!

2nd Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters—

1st Watch. Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

163 they] thy *F corr. Theobald*

187–9 *Conrade.* Masters . . . us *Q, F*

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV.—Hero's *Apartment.*

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [*Exit.*

Marg. Troth, I think your other rebato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth 's not so good; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin 's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown 's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O! that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth 's but a night-gown in respect of yours: cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel; but for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on 't.

19 o' *Capell*: a *Q, F* 20 set with pearles, downe sleeues *Q, F*: set with pearls down sleeves *Steevens*

Hero. God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee! art not ashamed?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, 'saving your reverence, a husband': an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody: is there any harm in 'the heavier for a husband'? None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy: ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now! do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap 's into 'Light o' love'; that goes without a burden: do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, 'Light o' love' with your heels! then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; 'tis

45, 48 o' love *Rowe*: a loue *Q, F* 48 Yea *conj. Capell*: Ye *Q, F* 50 see] looke *F*

time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Heigh-ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there 's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?

Marg. Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

Hero. These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuffed, cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuffed! there 's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me! God help me! how long have you professed apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely!

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus! why Benedictus? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Marg. Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love: nay, by 'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or

that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging: and how you may be converted, I know not; but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw: the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Another Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO *with* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off

S. D. Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough Q, F

the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me! ha?

Dogb. Yea, an 't were a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship, as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, 'when the age is in, the wit is out'. God help us! it is a world to see! Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: well, God 's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever

27 pound] times *F* 35 ha'] ha *Q*: havue *F*

broke bread: but God is to be worshipped: all men are not alike; alas! good neighbour.

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir: our watch, sir, hath indeed comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me: I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them: I am ready.

[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and* Messenger.

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol: we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here 's that shall drive some of them to a *non-come*: only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol. [*Exeunt.*

55 as it] as *F* 65–6 examination these] examine those *F*

ACT IV

Scene I.—*The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, *and attendants.*

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief: only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment, why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer; none.

Claud. O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? Why then, some be of laughing, as ah! ha! he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave:

7 her: Frier, you *Q, F*: *conj. Rowe* 20–1 not . . . do *om. F*
23 ah] ha *F*

Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?
Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.
Claud. And what have I to give you back whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?
D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.
Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She 's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold! how like a maid she blushes here.
O! what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal.
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.
Leon. What do you mean, my lord?
Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity—
Claud. I know what you would say: if I have known her,
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin.
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, showed

Bashful sincerity and comely love.
Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
Claud. Out on thee! Seeming! I will write against it:
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.
Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?
Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?
D. Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
D. John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True! O God!
Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is so; but what of this, my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter;
And by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
Hero. O, God defend me! how am I beset!
What kind of catechizing call you this?
Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name

58 Out on thee! Seeming! *conj. Seymour* Out on thee seeming, *Q, F. See note* 78 so *om. F*

With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can Hero:
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.
Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.
D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window;
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.
D. John. Fie, fie! they are not to be named, my lord,
Not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.
Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.
Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me? [HERO *swoons.*

89 are you] you are *F* 98 spoke] spoken *F* *S. D.* Hero *swoons. add. Hanmer.*

Beat. Why, how now, cousin! wherefore sink you down?

D. John. Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Don John *and* Claudio.

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think! help, uncle!
Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

Leon. O Fate! take not away thy heavy hand:
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero!

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea; wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes;
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O! one too much by thee. Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,

S. D. Exeunt ... Claudio *add. Rowe* 128 rearward] reward *F* 135 smirched] smeered *F*

I might have said, ' No part of it is mine ;
This shame derives itself from unknown loins ? '
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her ; why, she—O ! she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh.
Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attired in wonder,
I know not what to say.
Beat. O ! on my soul, my cousin is belied !
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night ?
Beat. No, truly, not ; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd ! O ! that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the two princes lie ? and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears ? Hence from her ! let her die.
Friar. Hear me a little ;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune.
By noting of the lady I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face ; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes ;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire

145–7 Sir . . . say *printed as prose in Q and F* 154 two *om. F* 157–60 Hear . . . mark'd *printed as prose in Q and F : corr. Ed. See note* 163 beat] beare *F*

To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.
Leon. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury: she not denies it.
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?
Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none;
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! O, my father!
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.
Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.
Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.
Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,

169. tenour *spelt* tenure in *Q*, *F*

These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awak'd in such a kind,
Both strength of limb and policy of mind,
Ability in means and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.
Friar. Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead,
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed:
Maintain a mourning ostentation;
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.
Leon. What shall become of this? What will this do?
Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse; that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied and excus'd
Of every hearer; for it so falls out

199 kind, *Q*: kinde *F*: cause *conj. Capell.* *See note* 204 the princesse (left for dead,) *Q*: the Princesse (left for dead) *F*: the princes left for dead; *corr. Theobald.* *See note*

That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio:
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving-delicate, and full of life
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed: then shall he mourn,—
If ever love had interest in his liver,—
And wish he had not so accused her,
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy:
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,—
As best befits her wounded reputation,—
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,

230 mouing delicate *Q, F* : moving-delicate *conj. Capell*

The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented : presently away ; For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure. Come, lady, die to live : this wedding day Perhaps is but prolong'd : have patience and endure. [*Exeunt* FRIAR, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason ; I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat. Ah ! how much might the man deserve of me that would right her.

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you : is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you ; but believe me not, and yet I lie not ; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me ; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

279 swear] swear by it *F*

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is a' not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O! that I were a man. What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice,—

290 it *om. F* 307 a *Q and F*: a' *Ed.*: he *Rowe. See note*

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window! a proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice,—

Beat. Sweet Hero! she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count! Count Comfect; a sweet gallant, surely! O! that I were a man for his sake, or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough! I am engaged, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is dead; and so, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

323 count! Count Comfect] Counte, Counte Comfect *Q*: Count, Comfect *F* 327 curtsies *spelt* cursies *Q, F* 342 so I] so *F*

Scene II.—*A Prison.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, *and* Sexton, *in gowns; and the* Watch, *with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O! a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that 's certain: we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before Master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb. Write down Master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

Both. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down that they hope they serve God: and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to

S. D. Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne clearke in gownes Q, F: corr. Capell. See note 1, 2 *Dogberry*] *Keeper: Verges*] *Cowley Q, F On the prefixes to the speeches throughout this scene, see note* 20–3 *Both . . .* villains *om. F*

be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that 's the eftest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

1st Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2nd Watch. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

31 ear, sir: I *Rowe*: eare sir, I *Q, F* 56 *Verg.*] *Const.* *Q, F.* *See note* mass] th'masse *F*

1st Watch. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2nd Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away: Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and, upon the grief of this, suddenly died. Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before and show him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned! Let them be in the bands!

Con. Off, Coxcomb!

Dogb. God 's my life! where 's the sexton? let him write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass; you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! but, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full

70 Leonato's] Leonato *F* 73–5 *Constable.* Come let them be opinioned. *Couley.* Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe *Q*: *Const.* Come let them be opinioned. *Sex.* Let them be in the hands of *Coxcombe F*: *conj. Ed., partly after Warburton. See note* 78 bind them. Thou] bind them, thou *Q*: bind them thou *F* 80 *Conrade corr. Rowe*: *Couley Q, F*

of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

Scene I.—*Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.
Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine:
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard;

91 is *om. F*
6 comforter] comfort *F*
S.D. Antonio] *his brother Q, F*
7 do] doth *F*

Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem' when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs; make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man; for, brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air and agony with words.
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace! I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Ant. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

16 Bid sorrow wag *conj. Capell*: And sorrow, wagge *Q, F.*

See note 1434-4

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.
Claud. Good day to both of you.
Leon. Hear you, my lords,—
D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.
Leon. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord:
Are you so hasty now?—well, all is one.
D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.
Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.
Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou dissembler, thou.
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.
Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leon. Tush, tush, man! never fleer and jest at me:
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child:

67 mine] my *F*

Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors ;
O ! in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany !
Claud. My villany ?
Leon. Thine, Claudio ; thine, I say.
D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.
Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice,
His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.
Claud. Away ! I will not have to do with you.
Leon. Canst thou so daff me ? Thou hast kill'd my child ;
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed :
But that 's no matter ; let him kill one first :
Win me and wear me ; let him answer me.
Come, follow me, boy ; come, sir boy, come, follow me.
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence ;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
Leon. Brother,—
Ant. Content yourself. God knows I lov'd my niece ;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops !
Leon. Brother Antony,—
Ant. Hold you content. What, man ! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,

Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antickly, and show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies—if they durst ;
And this is all !

Leon. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter :
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death ;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord—

D. Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No? Come, brother, away. I will be heard.—

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt* Leonato *and* Antonio.

Enter Benedick.

D. Pedro. See, see ; here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, signior : you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapped off with two old men without teeth.

D Pedro. Leonato and his brother, what

96 antickly *spelt* antiquely *Q*. *F* 97 speak off] speak of *Q*, *F* *corr. Theobald* 114 like] likt *Q*, *F*

think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw, to pleasure us

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What, courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

Claud. Nay then, give him another staff: this last was broke cross.

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. [*Aside to* CLAUDIO.] You are a villain; I jest not: I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do

me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

D. Pedro. What, a feast, a feast?

Claud. I' faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's-head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife 's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadst a fine wit. 'True,' said she, 'a fine little one.' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit.' 'Right,' said she, 'a great gross one.' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit.' 'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody.' 'Nay,' said I, 'the gentleman is wise.' 'Certain,' said she, 'a wise gentleman.' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues.' 'That I believe,' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning: there 's a double tongue; there 's two tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues; yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she

158 I faith I thanke him he *Q*: I faith I thanke him, he *F*
166 said] saies *F*

would love him dearly. The old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all; and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

D. Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick the married man!'

Bene. Fare you well, boy: you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lack-beard there, he and I shall meet; and till then, peace be with him.

[*Exit.*

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

D. Pedro. But, soft you; let me be: pluck up, my heart, and be sad! Did he not say my brother was fled?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and the* Watch, *with* CONRADE *and* BORACHIO.

Dogb. Come, you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

D. Pedro. How now! two of my brother's men bound! Borachio, one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D. Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what 's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and, by my troth, there 's one meaning well suited.

D. Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What 's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very

S. D. Enter . . . with] *Enter Constables Q: Enter Constable F Placed by Q and F before l.* 209

eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her. My villany they have upon record; which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea; and paid me richly for the practice of it.

D. Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery:
And fled he is upon this villany.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs: by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. And masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes Master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, *and the* Sexton.

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself:
Here stand a pair of honourable men;
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death:
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience;
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I:
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live;
That were impossible: but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died; and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,

S. D. Re-enter . . . Sexton] *Enter Leonato F* 276 Art thou the] Art thou thou the *F, which prints* Art . . . childe *as prose.*

Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones : sing it to-night.
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that 's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us :
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me !
I do embrace your offer, and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming ;
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul she was not ;
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me ;
But always hath been just and virtuous
In anything that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir,—which, indeed, is not under white and black,—this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass : I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed : they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath used so long and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. There 's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation !

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship ; which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship ! I wish your worship well ; God restore you to health ! I humbly give you leave to depart, and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it ! Come, neighbour. [*Exeunt* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords : we look for you to-morrow.

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt* Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Leon. [*To the* Watch.] Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—Leonato's *Orchard.*

Enter Benedick *and* Margaret.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me! why shall I always keep below stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman: and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice; and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs. [*Exit* MARGARET.

Bene. And therefore will come.

The god of love,
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve,—

I mean, in singing; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and

9–10 me, why shal *Q*: me, why, shall *F* 26-9 *Printed as prose in Q, F* 33 names] name *F*

over as my poor self, in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rime; I have tried: I can find out no rime to 'lady' but 'baby', an innocent rime; for 'scorn', 'horn', a hard rime; for 'school', 'fool', a babbling rime; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a riming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

Beat. Yea, signior; and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then!

Beat. 'Then' is spoken; fare you well now: and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkissed.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with

37 in *om. F* 39, 40 rime] time *F* 42 nor] for *F*

them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. 'Suffer love,' a good epithet! I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there 's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question: why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum: therefore is it most expedient for the wise—if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary—to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

69 epithet *spelt* epithite *Q, F* 84 monument] monuments *F*
85 bell rings] Bels ring *F* 92 to myself. So much] to myself so much *Q, F*

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder 's old coil at home: it is proved, my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Churchyard.*

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and three or four with tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?

A Lord. It is, my lord.

Claud. [*Reading Epitaph from a scroll.*]

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.
Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

S. D. A Churchyard *add. Ed.*: a Church *Pope* *S. D. Claudio* [*Reading . . . scroll*] *Ed. after Capell*: *Epitaph Q, F. See note* 11 dumb *spelt* dombe *F*: dead *Q*

SONG

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight;
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, assist our moan;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily:
Graves, yawn and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Now, unto thy bones good night!
Yearly will I do this rite.

D. Pedro. Good morrow, masters: put your torches out.
The wolves have preyed; and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us: fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow, masters: each his several way.

D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds;
And then to Leonato's we will go.

Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed 's,
Than this for whom we render'd up this woe!

[*Exeunt.*

17, 18 *one line in Q, F* 22 Heavily, heavily] Heauenly, heauenly *F* 23 *Claudio corr. Rowe*: *Lord Q, F* 24 rite] right *Q, F* 33 speed 's *conj. Theobald after Thirlby*: speeds *Q, F.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, FRIAR FRANCIS, *and* HERO.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?
Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accus'd her
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.
Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.
Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.
Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you, come hither masked.
[*Exeunt ladies.*
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me. You know your office, brother;
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.
Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what, signior?
Bene. To bind me, or undo me; one of them.
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.
Leon. That eye my daughter lent her: 'tis most true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

S. D. Antonio] *old man Q, F* 7 sorts] sort *F*

Leon. The sight whereof I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince. But what 's your will?
Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
In the state of honourable marriage:
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.
Here come the prince and Claudio.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio, *and two or three others.*

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.
Leon. Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:
We here attend you. Are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?
Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.
Leon. Call her forth, brother: here 's the friar ready. [*Exit* Antonio.
D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what 's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?
Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush! fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

33 *om. F* *S. D. and two or three other Q: with attendants F*

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leapt your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.
Claud. For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.

Re-enter Antonio, *with the ladies masked.*

Which is the lady I must seize upon?
Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.
Claud. Why, then she 's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.
Ant. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar:
I am your husband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife:
[*Unmasking.*
And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero!
Hero. Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defil'd, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.
D. Pedro. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!
Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.
Friar. All this amazement can I qualify:
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:

S. D. Re-enter . . . masked Capell: *Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula Q, F* 54, 56 *Antonio*] *Leonato Q, F. See note* 63 defil'd *om. F*

Meantime, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.
Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?
Beat. [*Unmasking.*] I answer to that name. What is your will?
Bene. Do not you love me?
Beat. Why, no; no more than reason.
Bene. Why, then, your uncle and the prince and Claudio
Have been deceived; for they swore you did.
Beat. Do not you love me?
Bene. Troth, no; no more than reason.
Beat. Why, then, my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,
Are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.
Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.
Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.
Bene. 'Tis no such matter. Then, you do not love me?
Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.
Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.
Claud. And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her;
For here 's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.
Hero. And here 's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,

75–6 *printed as prose in F* 76 for they *corr. Capell*: they *Q, F* 80, 81 that *om. F* 82 such *om. F*

Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here 's our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace! I will stop your mouth.

[*Kissing her.*

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of witcrackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No; if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it, for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but, in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer; which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

98 *Benedick corr. Theobald*: *Leonato Q, F* *S. D. Kissing her add. Theobald* 108 what *om. F*

Bene. Come, come, we are friends. Let 's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my word ; therefore play, music ! Prince, thou art sad ; get thee a wife, get thee a wife : there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow : I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers ! [*Dance. Exeunt.*

NOTES

Dramatis Personae. Neither *Q* nor *F* nor any of the later Folios gives a list. It was first added by Rowe, and has been emended by later editors, especially Capell. The list here given has been enlarged to include all speaking characters. *Mutae personae* are given separately at the end. On Antonio's son see note on I. ii. 27.

ACT I

Scene i. A full-stage scene. Pope locates it in 'A Court before Leonato's House'. Capell's vaguer direction, 'Before Leonato's House', has been adopted by later editors. If the proposed emendation in I. ii. 11 of 'the' be accepted, the natural inference is that this scene, like II. iii. and iii. I and V. ii. is laid in Leonato's orchard, which was evidently in front of his house. On the Elizabethan stage an economical use of full-stage settings was imperative. Moreover, if the scene is laid in the orchard, it is more natural for Benedick and Claudio to linger behind after l. 169 and for Don Pedro to come to look for them after l. 213. The time is Monday, probably in the morning or early afternoon, as after Don Pedro and his friends have accepted Leonato's invitation there has to be sufficient time for the preparations for the revels on the same evening.

6. ***this action.*** See *Introduction*, p. xv.

16–7. ***in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion.*** The Messenger, whose mannered phraseology (though Leonato catches its infection for the moment) throws into relief the easy conversational rhythm of the speeches of the other characters in this scene, here talks pure euphuism. The use of cross-alliteration and of imagery from the animal world are two of its most distinctive notes.

20. ***an uncle.*** Not mentioned elsewhere in the play, nor in any of the other known versions of the tale. The reference to him here helps to connect the Florentine Claudia with

Messina, and to explain how he had become acquainted with Hero before 'this ended action' (cf. ll. 318–21).

25. *badge.* 'A badge was a mark of service: hence appropriately used for a mark of inferiority, and as such an expression of modesty' (W. A. Wright).

28. *kind . . . kindness*: a play upon the original meaning of 'kind' = 'natural'.

32. *Signior Mountanto.* The nickname with which Beatrice introduces Benedick into the dialogue is borrowed from the fencing-school. Bobadil in *Every Man in his Humour*, IV. v. 87–9, speaks of 'your punto, your reverso, your stoccato, your imbroccato, your passada, your montanto'. It means 'an upright blow or thrust', and thus prepares the audience in advance for Benedick's dialectical dexterity.

39. *Padua.* The cultured Benedick is a worthy son of 'fair Padua, nursery of arts' (*Tam. of Shr.* I. i. 2. It is curious that he comes from Padua to Messina, while Petruchio, his rougher prototype, comes from Verona to Padua.

42–3. *set up his bills . . . flight.* Combatants issued challenges by posting up bills, stating, among other particulars, what weapons were to be used. Cf. Nash, *Have with you to Saffron Walden* (III. 121, ed. McKerrow): 'hee braves it indefinitely in her behalfe, setting vp bills like a Bear-ward or Fencer, what fights we shall have, and what weapons she will meete me at.' Benedick, the professed mysogynist, challenged the God of Love to a match at long-distance shooting. The meaning appears to be that Benedick, who boasts that he is loved of all ladies' (l. 135), had claimed to be a more unerring marksman at female hearts than Cupid himself.

43–4. *my uncle's fool.* The only allusion in the play to Leonato's fool. It is remarkable that, while Touchstone and Feste are so prominent in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, there is no fool in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

45. *bird-bolt:* a short arrow with a flat head, which, as comparatively harmless, was allowed to be used by fools.

62. *stuffed.* For this use of the word cf. *Rom. and Jul.* III. v. 183, 'Stuff'd, as they say, with honourable parts'.

64–5. *a stuffed man . . . mortal.* If the punctuation of *Q* and *F*, which have a comma after 'well', is retained, there is an antithesis between 'stuffed' and 'stuffing well'. Beatrice agrees that Benedick is 'stuffed', probably with reference to his achievements as a trencherman · but as to his being

crammed with all virtues, he shares the general imperfection of humanity. Subsequent editors have, however, adopted Theobald's punctuation, 'stuffing,—well, we are'. But it is doubtful if this is an Elizabethan use of 'well', and the breaking off of a sentence is not at all characteristic of Beatrice's manner of speech.

73–4. ***wit . . . warm.*** A proverbial phrase. Cf. *Tam. of the Shr.* II. i. 26:

Pet. Am I not wise?
Kate. Yes, keep you warm.

74. ***difference.*** A heraldic term: the alteration or addition to a coat-of-arms to distinguish a younger or lateral branch of a family. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. v. 182, 'O, you must wear your rue with a difference'.

78. ***sworn brother.*** *Fratres iurati* were persons vowed to assist one another, especially on military expeditions. Thus in *Henry V*, II. i. 13–14, Bardolph declares that he, Nym, and Pistol will 'be all three sworn brothers to France'.

81–2. ***fashion . . . block.*** Rushton, *Shakespeare's Euphuism*, p. 52, aptly quotes in illustration the following passage: 'Thy friendship *Philautus* is lyke a new fashion, which being vsed in the morning, is accompted olde before noone, which varietie of chaunging, being often-times noted of a graue Gentleman in *Naples*, who hauing bought a Hat of the newest fashion, & best block in all *Italy*, and wearing but one daye, it was tolde him y^t it was stale, he hung it vp in his studie, & viewing al sorts, al shapes, perceiued at y^e last, his olde Hat againe to come into the new fashion.' *Euphues and his England* (Lyly's Works, ed. Bond, ii. 96).

83–4. ***not in your books,*** not in favour with you. 'Book' and 'books' are often used by Shakespeare metaphorically in the sense of 'record' or 'register', e. g. *Cor.* v. ii. 14–15:

I have been
The book of his good acts.

86. ***study,*** library. Beatrice again retorts on the Messenger with a play upon words.

93. ***presently,*** immediately.

102. ***are you.*** It is difficult to see why editors, except Collier, have adopted the 'you are' of *F*. It is much more natural that Don Pedro should address Leonato, who is

awaiting him in the orchard outside his house, with a courteous query.

110. *charge*, burden, responsibility.

120. *fathers herself*, shows who her father is, by her likeness to him.

126. *still*, always.

149. *as yours were*. The verb is attracted with the subjunctive by the ''twere' on which it depends. Wright compares II. i. 7, 'He were an excellent man that were made'. The emendations that have been proposed are unnecessary.

154. *and so good a continuer*, and were so good a stayer.

156. *a jade's trick*. Suggested (after the fashion of Beatrice's retorts in this scene) by Benedick's reference to his horse. It is, therefore, probably superfluous to try to ascertain what trick exactly is meant.

158. *That is . . . Leonato*. With these words Don Pedro ends a discussion of arrangements that he has been making with Leonato while Beatrice and Benedick have been having their verbal bout. He then turns to Claudio and Benedick and gives them Leonato's invitation. *F* by substituting 'This' for 'That' obscures the sense, as does also the punctuation of both *Q* and *F*. See textual notes.

161. *at the least a month*. See note on III. ii. 1–2.

166. *forsworn . . . Let*. *Q* and *F* have a comma after 'forsworn', but a full stop is necessary, as the words 'Let . . . duty' are addressed to Don John. Hanmer first inserted the S.D., which makes this clear.

172–3. It is a sign of Don Pedro's courtesy that he will not take advantage of the royal prerogative to enter the house in front of his host.

176. *I noted her not*. The changed pronunciation of 'not', which had a long 'o' in Elizabethan English, obscures the play upon words here. It recurs with a further play on 'noting' and 'nothing' in II. iii. 59–62.

184–7. *too low . . . afford her*. Cf. *Euphues and his England* (Lyly's Works, ii. 60), 'I know not how I should commend your beautie, because it is somewhat to brown, nor your stature being somewhat to low'.

197. *sad*, serious.

198. *the flouting Jack*. Furness notes that in *Q* and *F* 'iacke' is spelt without a capital, which shows that the word had here lost its personal significance. To 'play the

Jack with' = 'play the knave with, mislead' (cf. *The Tempest*, IV. i. 197–8). 'Flouting' is explained by Puttenham's definition of 'the Broad floute' (first quoted by Staunton) 'when we deride by plaine and flat contradiction, as he that saw a dwarfe go in the streete said to his companion that walked with him: see yonder gyant' (*Arte of English Poesie*, p. 201, ed. Arber). Similarly (asks Benedick) does Claudio assert that the blind God of Love is sharp-sighted enough to spy out a hare in hiding, or that the god who works at the forge is a first-rate carpenter?

200–1. ***to go in the song***, to be in harmony with you.

227–9. ***think so . . . in love.*** Editors since Theobald have put a colon or a full stop after 'allegiance'. The punctuation of *Q* and *F* has here been restored with slight modification. With this punctuation 'on my allegiance . . . allegiance' is a parenthetical clause = as I have been charged to speak on my allegiance. See textual notes.

233. ***If this . . . uttered***, if this were the case, such would be the terms in which to announce it. But why should Claudio make such an evasive answer? He has already confessed his love for Hero to Benedick, and in ll. 237–8 he reiterates this. Probably the line (as Hudson has suggested) is spoken by Don Pedro. This would give greater point to Benedick's next speech, which would then be a retort to the Prince.

234. ***the old tale.*** The story of the 'Bluebeard', Mr. Fox, and his visitor, Lady Mary, containing the formula quoted by Benedick was communicated by Blakeway to the variorum edition of 1821. It is reproduced in full in Furness's edition of *Much Ado about Nothing*, *ad loc.*

241. ***fetch me in***, entrap me.

245. ***my two faiths and troths***, i. e. to Don Pedro and Claudio.

256. ***in the force of his will***, 'by wilful obstinacy: not by argument, or because he believed what he said' (W. A. Wright). There seems to be a reference to the scholastic definition of heresy, as not merely error, but a wilful adherence to it.

264. ***the fine***, the conclusion. The pun on 'finer' which follows is unworthy of Benedick's wit, and is an echo of the word-play in Shakespeare's earliest comedies.

270. ***lose more blood with love.*** The sighs of a lover were supposed to consume the blood.

272. ***a ballad-maker's pen.*** The punishment would fit the

crime, for lovers were the typical ballad-makers. Cf. *As You Like It*, II. vii. 147–9.

275. ***this faith.*** Don Pedro reverts to the theological imagery of ll. 251–6.

argument, subject for ridicule.

276. ***in a bottle***, in a basket. Shooting at a cat suspended in a basket was a favourite sport for archers.

278. ***Adam.*** Theobald first suggested that the reference is to Adam Bell, a famous archer of the Border country, whose feats, with those of Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudesly, were celebrated in a ballad first printed about 1550. There is no instance, however, of Adam Bell being mentioned merely by his Christian name.

279. ***as time shall try.*** Cf. *As You Like It*, IV. i. 210–11, 'Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try'.

280. ***In time . . . yoke.*** Quoted, with slight variations, from Kyd's *Spanish Tragedie*, II. i. 3: 'In time the savage bull sustains the yoke.' The line has a long literary ancestry, through Watson's *Hecatompathia*, xxvii. i, and Serafino's *Sonnets*, ciii. 1–2, to Ovid's *Tristia*, iv. 6. 1–2, or *Ars Amatoria*, i. 471.

281–2. ***savage bull . . . sensible Benedick.*** The euphuistic cross-alliteration is noticeable.

289. ***horn-mad.*** The double sense in which the words are used is sufficiently illustrated in *The Com. of Err.* II. i. 57:

Dro. E. Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.
Ad. Horn-mad, thou villain!
Dro. E. I mean not cuckold-mad; but sure he is stark mad.

291. ***quiver . . . quake.*** The alliterative word-play is noticeable.

Venice, notorious for dissolute living. Coryat in his *Crudities* (Maclehose's edition, 1905), i. 401, states that 'the name of a cortezan of Venice is famoused over all Christendome'.

294–5. ***temporize with the hours***, come to terms in the course of time. 'With' as in other passages after 'temporize', e. g. *King John*, v. ii. 125, 'He will not temporize with my entreaties', has an instrumental sense.

299. ***I have almost matter enough in me***, I have almost sufficient sense.

300. ***and so I commit you.*** Benedick begins the customary

formula ending an Elizabethan letter, which Claudio and Don Pedro complete.

303. ***The sixth of July.*** Fleay was right in stating that the dates introduced into plays often corresponded to the dates of their first production. An instance of this is found in the Cambridge play, *Silvanus*, acted at St. John's College, as the title-page mentions, on 13 January 1596/7. In Act III. i. one of the characters executes a mock legal document 'sigillo meo sigillatas, Datas 13° Januarij'. Hence Furness is not justified in ridiculing Fleay because he sought in Don Pedro's words a clue to the date of *Much Ado about Nothing*. It is not at all improbable that *Much Ado about Nothing* was first acted on July 6, unless the date was merely chosen, as W. A. Wright thinks, because it was 'old Midsummer day, an appropriate date for such Midsummer madness'. But Fleay characteristically did not stop here. As Leonato in II. i. 386–7 speaks of 'Monday . . . which is hence a just seven-night', and as July 6 fell on Monday in 1590 and 1601, but not in any intervening year, Fleay concluded that the play was first written in 1590 and 'almost recomposed at its reproduction'. It is to be regretted that so ingenious an argument yields such an unsatisfactory result.

308. ***old ends***, tags of prose or verse. Cf. *Richard III*, I. iii. 336–7:

> And thus I clothe my naked villany
> With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ.

315. ***Hath . . . son.*** It is curious that Claudio, whose uncle lives in Messina, and who has been sufficiently in Hero's company before the 'ended action' to form an attachment for her, should need to ask such a question about the Governor of the city.

316. ***she's his only heir.*** Hero thus differs from Fenicia in Bandello's novel, whose only dower is her beauty. Her position is more akin to that of Genevra. See *Introduction*, pp. vi and xxi.

327. ***like a lover.*** Don Pedro is probably playing upon Claudio's distinction between 'liking' and 'love' in l. 321.

presently, immediately.

328. ***a book of words***, a bookful of phrases.

330. ***break with her***, broach the matter to her.

330–1. ***and with . . . have her.*** The omission of these words

in *F* is due to the printer mistaking the 'her' in l. 330 for the 'her' in l. 331.

337. ***What need the bridge much broader***, What need (is there for) the bridge (to be) much broader? The line 'does double duty, referring alike to Claudio's speech and to Don Pedro's answer' (J. C. Smith).

338–9. ***The fairest . . . fit,*** the best gift to a man is what he requires: what will answer his needs is suitable.

339. ***'tis once***, once for all.

344. ***unclasp.*** Don Pedro carries on the metaphor of the lover as a 'bookworm' from l. 328.

I. ii. A front-stage scene. While this and the following scene are being played in front of the traverse, preparations are being made behind it for the elaborate full-stage scene in Act II. i. The time is Monday evening, before supper.

S.D. ***Antonio.*** *Q* and *F* have 'an old man, brother to Leonato', and prefix 'old' to his speeches in this scene. Leonato calls his brother Anthony in v. i. 91 and 99; but Ursula, in II. i. 118, addresses him as 'Signior Antonio'. Hence Rowe introduced here and in subsequent stage-directions the Italian form of this name.

2. ***cousin.*** 'Used of any collateral relative more distant than brother or sister' (Onions). Here it means nephew; in II. i. 69, v. iv. 84, niece; in *Tw. Night*, I. v. 130, uncle; in *1 Henry IV*, III. i. 52, brother-in-law; in *Rich. III*, II. ii. 8, grandchild.

8. ***event stamps.*** *Q* and *F* have 'euents', and this may be right. For the use of the plural 'events' = issue, cf. *Meas. for Meas.* III. ii. 258–9, 'leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous'. But when a plural noun takes a singular verb, the verb usually precedes it. Probably the final 's' in 'events' was due to the printer's eye or ear being caught by the initial 's' in 'stamps'. *F 2* and its successors have 'event'.

11. ***the orchard.*** 'Mine', the reading of *Q*, is almost certainly a mistake for 'the', due to the phrase that follows, 'a man of mine'. *F*, probably on account of the jingle caused by the repetition of 'mine', reads 'my orchard'. But Antonio, who evidently, like Beatrice, lives with the wealthy Governor, must be referring here to the orchard in front of Leonato's house, which is spoken of four times later in the

play. In II. iii. 4 Benedick bids a boy bring a book 'hither to me in the orchard', and in III. i. 4–5 Hero bids Margaret tell Beatrice that she and Ursula 'walk in the orchard'; in III. iii. 159–62 Borachio relates how 'the prince, Claudio, and my master . . . saw afar off in the orchard' the encounter between himself and Margaret; and in V. i. 249, in confessing the plot to Don Pedro, he again speaks of 'the orchard'. Moreover, the 'thick-pleached alley', mentioned here by Antonio, is evidently 'the pleached bower' or alley (III. i. 7 and 16) where Hero and Ursula are overheard by Beatrice.

The apparently slight change of 'mine' into 'the' has important consequences. If the conversation between the Prince and Claudio, here inaccurately reported, took place in Antonio's orchard, it evidently could not be the conversation between them at the close of the previous scene. But if it took place in the orchard before Leonato's house, it doubtless was this conversation, the orchard thus being the scene of Act I. i, as well as of Act II. iii and Act III. i, probably of Act V. ii, and possibly of Act II. i. On this assumption the whole difficulty raised by Spedding in a well-known passage (*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1877–9, p. 20) disappears, and with it his proposal to begin a new Act with the present scene: 'We are called on to imagine that while the scene was merely shifting, the Prince and Claudio have had time for a second conversation in Antonio's orchard, and that one of Antonio's men, overhearing it, has had time to tell him of it. Now this is one of the things which it is *impossible* to imagine. . . . The imagination refuses to be so imposed upon.' Shakespeare, it is safe to say, made no such call upon the imagination of his audience, and the less so because there was no 'scene-shifting' at this point, but merely a drawing of the traverse.

16. ***accordant***, agreeable.

23–4. ***till it appear itself***, till it become a definite reality. Neither here nor in *Cymb.* III. iv. 147–8, 'disguise that which, a reflexive itself, must not yet be', is there any need to assume t' appear use of the verb.

27–31. S.D. [***Enter Antonio's son . . .***] ***Cousin, you know . . . busy time.*** There is no S.D. in *Q* or *F*, but Antonio evidently goes out, and Leonato addresses the rest of his speech to other persons. Who are they? Evidently first the 'cousin' (nephew) whom he has asked for in ll. 1–2, and whom, as he

enters, he reminds of what he has 'to do', i. e. to provide music for the revels. But the 'cousin' has attended to this, and is followed on to the stage by a musician (perhaps carrying the drum mentioned in the S.D. of *F* after II. i. 91). Leonato, with an apology to the musician for not noticing him at once, bids him follow him, that he may make use of his 'skill' for the entertainment of his guests. Then, satisfied with what his nephew has done, Leonato addresses him again more affectionately as 'Good cousin'. The sense of the passage has been obscured not only by the omission of stage directions in *Q* and *F*, but by their reading 'cousins' in l. 28 instead of 'cousin'. The interpolation of a final 's' is one of the most common of textual errors.

I. iii. A front-stage scene. The time is Monday night during supper.

12. *born under Saturn.* A man born under the influence of this planet was reputed to be 'misdoing, slowe, and heauie'.

13–14. *a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief*, a remedy made up of moralizing to a deadly malady. The alliterative balance between 'medicine' and 'mischief' had been used by Lyly, *Euphues* (Works, I. 247), 'be as earnest to seeke a medicine, as you wer eager to run into a mischiefe'. Shakespeare doubles the cross-alliterates by adding contrasted epithets.

22. *without controlment*, without being checked.

23–4. *You have of late stood out against your brother.* See *Introduction*, p. xv.

30–1. *my blood*, my disposition. Some have interpreted 'blood' as base blood, or bastardy. But Don John would scarcely speak of this to his retainers, and throughout the scene he is making a defiant declaration of his character.

31–2. *fashion a carriage*, assume a deportment.

37. *sing in my cage.* An abrupt change from the metaphor of a muzzled and fettered dog, which is resumed in the next sentence.

43–4. *I make all use of it, for I use it only.* A play upon 'use' in its ordinary meaning and 'use' in the sense of to 'keep company with'. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. ii. 8–10:

> why do you keep alone,
> Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
> Using those thoughts which should indeed have died?

56. *A proper squire*, a fine fellow. For this contemptuous use of 'squire', cf. *Oth.* IV. ii. 145–6:

> Some such squire he was,
> That turn'd your wit the seamy side without.

60. *A very forward March-chick.* The words appear to be a petulant gibe at Hero, though they are curiously inapplicable to her docile and reticent nature. They may, however, be meant for Claudio, who, though a 'young start-up' (l. 71), aspires to the hand of the rich Governor's daughter.

62–3. *Being entertained . . . musty room.* For the use of fumigation to sweeten or dry the atmosphere of rooms when guests were expected, cf. Chapman's *The Widow's Tears*, III. ii. 9, where the usher, before a bridal mask, cries to an attendant, 'Perfume, sirrah, the room's dampish'. In ignorance of this custom Rowe, in his second edition (1714), and Pope made the grotesque emendation 'as I was smoking in'.

63–4. *comes me the prince and Claudio.* The familiarity with which Borachio thus alludes to Don Pedro and his favourite makes the use both of the 'ethical dative' and of the singular verb preceding two subjects—unceremoniously thrown into one—decidedly piquant here.

64. *sad conference*, serious conversation.

65–8. *I whipt me . . . Claudio.* As Borachio had hidden behind the arras or tapestry, the conversation that he overheard presumably took place in the 'musty room', and was a continuation of that between Don Pedro and Claudio in the orchard. Or if the room overlooked the orchard, he may be referring to I. i. 341–9. See further *Introduction*, p. xvii.

70–2. *That young . . . overthrow.* Cf. I. i. 10–4 and *Introduction*, p. xv.

72. *cross . . . bless.* 'Though "cross" here is, of course, primarily to thwart, to hinder, yet the use of the word "bless" immediately afterwards suggests an allusion to the making of the sign of the cross, as by a priest when blessing, or by a layman when endeavouring to avert a danger, a curse, &c.' (Deighton).

77–8. *Would the cook were a my mind.* Don John hints that he would not object to seeing his enemies got rid of by poison.

ACT II

Scene i. A full-stage scene. But, as the editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare have pointed out, it is doubtful whether the scene is supposed to be within Leonato's house or outside. As a rule, in Shakespeare's plays maskers enter the hall where a banquet has already taken place. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.* i. v, and *Henry VIII*, i. iv. Leonato's question in l. 1, 'Was not Count John here at supper?' taken together with his exclamation in ll. 90–1, 'The revellers are entering, brother: make good room,' suggests that this is intended to be the case here. If so, the stage has been transformed, during scenes ii and iii, from an 'orchard' into a hall. But in l. 183 Don John cries, 'Come, let us to the banquet', and leaves the stage with Borachio, while at the close of the scene Don Pedro says to those about him, 'go in with me'. Hence the dancing may have taken place, not indoors, but in the orchard, on a terrace or smooth lawn. The time is Monday night, after supper.

s.d. *Enter ... Others.* *Q* and *F* mention here not only Leonato's wife, but 'a kinsman', probably Antonio's son of i. iii. On 'Margaret, Ursula', who are not mentioned in *Q* and *F*, see note on s.d. after l. 91.

In i. iii. 76 Don John had proposed to his followers to go 'to the great supper'. But from Antonio's answer to Leonato's question, the company seems to have risen before his arrival. The feasting, however, seems to be resumed after the dancing, for, as has been seen above, he cries, l. 183, 'Come, let us to the banquet'.

4. *heart-burned.* Heart-burn is caused by acidity.

10–11. *my lady's eldest son.* For illustration of this contemptuous use of the phrase, J. C. Smith quotes from *The Puritan*, i. ii. 55–7, 'Sonnes and Heyres, and Fooles, and Gulls, and Ladyes eldest Sonnes'.

29. *Just*, exactly so.

33. *lie in the woollen*, sleep between blankets without sheets. Capell's interpretation, 'lie in a woollen shroud', is alien to the merry spirit of the dialogue here. It also, as W. A. Wright points out, overlooks the fact that burial in woollen did not become usual till after the 'Woollen Act' of 1678.

43. *in earnest*, as an instalment.

bear-herd. *Q* and *F* have 'Berrord', which *F 3* and *F 4* expand into 'bear-herd'. This form is used in *2 Henry IV*, I. ii. 194, 'True valor is turn'd Beare-heard', and in *Tam. of Shr.* Ind. ii. 21, 'by transmutation a Beare-heard', the only Shakespearian passages in which the word is not contracted. Hence it has been adopted in the text, though Collier and others have adopted the expansion 'bear-ward'.

43–4. *lead his apes into hell.* Apes for exhibitions were often part of a bear-ward's stock-in-trade. To 'lead apes in hell' was the proverbial fate of old maids, but no satisfactory explanation of the phrase has been given.

51. *away to Saint Peter for the heavens; he shows.* The punctuation of *Q* and *F*, 'St. Peter: for the heavens, he shows,' has caused difficulty. But the colon has here its Shakespearian use before a rounding-off phrase, and the comma before 'he' is an instance of 'light stopping'. 'Sentences which we should now partition off by semicolons or colons ... were connected by commas if there was a connecting-link in the thought' (P. Simpson, *Shakespearian Punctuation*, pp. 16 and 67–8).

Some editors, however, misinterpreting the punctuation of *Q* and *F*, have taken 'for the heavens' to be the exclamation which is found in *The Merch. of Ven.* II. ii. 12, 'Away, says the fiend, for the heavens'. But such an exclamation following the words 'get you to heaven' would be singularly inapt and unworthy of Beatrice. Two of the *Hundred Merry Tales*, mentioned by Beatrice in l. 139, the 21st and the 78th, introduce St. Peter as the porter at heaven's gates.

71. *in that kind*, in the way of marriage. Leonato's attitude is exactly the opposite to that of Polonius when he warns Ophelia, 'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of your sphere'.

73–6. *music ... time ... measure ... dance.* A chain of verbal quips: 'measure' = 'moderation' and 'a stately dance'.

86. *passing.* Leonato appears to cap Beatrice's pun on 'cinque' and 'sink' with one on 'pace' (in its Elizabethan pronunciation) and 'passing'.

91. After this line Capell inserted the stage-direction 'Leonato and his Company mask', and this has been adopted by the Cambridge editors in the form 'All put on their masks'. But it is wrong. It is clear from the dialogue that follows

that, as in the similar episode in *Henry VIII*, I. iv, only the gentlemen are masked. Moreover, *Q* and *F* give only the names of gentlemen as entering here. Hence editors since Capell are mistaken in adding the names of Margaret and Ursula. Though they do not speak till ll. 105 and 117 respectively, they have evidently been present, in attendance on Hero, from the beginning of the scene, and their names have therefore been added to the opening stage-direction, as in Rowe's edition. 'dumbe John' in *Q* and *F* is a mistake for 'Don John', which Malone and Collier ascribe to a mishearing of the dictated text by the printer, though this is doubtful. But the preceding 'or' suggests that there is some confusion in the stage-direction. Don John may have entered here with Borachio, though he does not speak till l. 166. But it is wrong to include him, as all modern editions do, among the maskers. His character makes this impossible, and his remark, in l. 169, when Claudio is left alone, that 'but one visor remains', has more point if he is not wearing a visor himself. It is not improbable that he did not enter till after l. 165.

93. ***friend***, lover.

100–1. ***When I . . . case!*** When I like your appearance, for God forbid that the face hidden underneath your visor should be like its covering.

102–3. ***My visor . . . thatch'd.*** The allusion is to Ovid's story (*Met.* VII. 650) of how Baucis and Philemon in their thatched cottage entertained unawares Jupiter and Mercury. Don Pedro's heptameter is probably an imitation of Golding, whose translation of the *Metamorphoses* is in this metre. The line describing the cottage is rendered, 'The roof thereof was thatched all with straw and fennish reede'. The story must have been running in Shakespeare's head about this time, for in *As You Like It*, III. iii. 8, he again drags in an allusion to it, 'O knowledge ill inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatch'd house'. S. G. Owen has pointed out ('Ovid and Romance,' in a volume of Oxford essays on *English Literature and the Classics*, p. 185) that in one or other of Shakespeare's plays there are allusions to every one of the fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses*.

103. ***Speak . . . love.*** Hero has retorted to Don Pedro in his own Ovidian imagery and in verse. He now completes the heptameter, thus reproducing the effect of one of Golding's rhyming couplets.

104, 107, 109–10. These lines are assigned in *Q* and *F* to Benedick, but they doubtless belong, like 112 and 115, to Balthasar.

111. *God . . . dancer.* Margaret here says a characteristic prayer aloud.

114. *clerk.* It was the parish clerk's office to say the responses in church.

118. *Signior Antonio.* It is strange to find Antonio among the maskers, for Leonato had told him to 'make good room' (l. 91) when the revellers entered, as if he were merely to be a spectator.

119. *At a word*, in brief.

123. *do him so ill-well*, copy his defects to the life.

125. *dry hand*: a sign of cold blood, due, in Antonio's case, to age.

up and down, exactly, all over. But there is probably also a play on the literal meaning of the words.

139. *the 'Hundred Merry Tales'.* A collection of mirthful stories from many sources, of which the only complete copy still extant (in the library of the University of Göttingen) was printed by John Rastell in 1526.

The *Merry Tales* had thus been current for three-quarters of a century, and Beatrice resents the imputation upon her originality. So far as wit goes many of the tales would not have been unworthy of her, and their frequent coarseness would probably not have troubled her. But her favourite reading could not have been a book which is largely a satire on the follies and vices of women.

It is noticeable that the 73rd tale is about a priest in Stratford-on-Avon ('Stretforth vpon auayne'), and that it mentions the village of 'Shoterey not a mile from Strethforth'. For possible reminiscences of some of the tales by Shakespeare see notes on II. i. 51, III. ii. 74, and V. ii. 84–5.

147. *the prince's jester.* Beatrice has already (I. i. 44) put Benedick on a level with a professional fool: she now declares that he is one.

148. *only his gift*, his only gift. Cf. III. i. 23.

153. *the fleet*: the only use of the word by Shakespeare in the sense of a company of people.

154. *boarded*, accosted. Beatrice keeps up her nautical metaphor.

157. *a comparison*, a scoffing simile. Cf. *L. L. L.* v. ii. 852, 'Full of comparisons and scoffing flouts'.

162. *the leaders*, Hero and Don Pedro, who, by virtue of their rank, would head the dancers. Cf. ll. 167–8, 'Hero . . . the ladies follow her'.

165. *turning*: a play on the two meanings of a turning in a road and in a dance.

S.D. *Dance . . . Claudio.* The direction in *Q*, 'Dance . . . exeunt', implies that the dance takes place on the stage, in view of the spectators, and that afterwards the dancers withdraw. *F* has 'Exeunt' after Beatrice's speech, and below, 'Musicke for the dance'. This would suggest that the dance does not take place on the stage, but the audience only hear dance music from within. Hence Theobald, who did not know *Q*, inserted a S.D. 'Music within' before Beatrice's 'We must follow the leaders' in l. 162. This has been illogically retained by some later editors, together with the arrangement in *Q*. Probably this arrangement is right, and that in *F* is an accident of printing, due to the space in l. 165 after 'turning' being scarcely sufficient for the full S.D. See further the next note.

166–9. From Don John's description it looks as if after the dance the masked gentlemen (except Claudio) went out, as they had entered, in a body, Don Pedro, however, taking Leonato with him. Then the ladies go out separately, headed by Hero.

Sure . . . Hero. This remark of Don John is puzzling. It can scarcely be said aloud to deceive Claudio, for from Borachio's next speech it would appear that Don John has not yet recognized the Count through his mask. On the other hand, he had accepted Borachio's news that Don Pedro was to woo Hero on Claudio's behalf. It looks as if he were now led by the Prince's ardour as a suitor to believe that he is, after all, wooing Hero on his own account. This would add another link to the chain of misconceptions in the play.

183. *the banquet.* 'Banquet' is sometimes used by Shakespeare in a specialized sense to mean a light repast of fruit or wine at the close of festivities, e.g. *Tam. of the Shr.* v. ii. 9–10,

> My banquet is to close our stomachs up
> After our great good cheer,

and *Rom. and Jul.* I. v. 126, where Capulet, after a masked dance, cries,

> We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.

This sense would fit the situation here, but, if so, Don John

seems to have missed the supper, to which he had announced his intention of going in I. iii. 76, but at which apparently he had not been present (cf. ll. 1–2).

189. *all hearts . . . use*, let all hearts use.

192. *faith melteth into blood*, 'honour dissolves into passion' (J. C. Smith).

199. *willow*, the emblem of forsaken love. If the scene is laid in the orchard, Benedick's 'offer' gains additional point.

202. *a usurer's chain*. Usury, though forbidden by the Church, was practised by some of the wealthy merchants, who frequently wore chains.

210–2. Here again, as in I. i. 231–3, Benedick's illustration from an old tale is so condensed as to be enigmatical. Nor has in this case the story been traced. The nearest parallel is in the Spanish novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, translated into English by David Rowlands in 1586. In chap. i, the hero relates how he revenged himself on a blind man, who had stolen his sausage, by making him jump against a post.

213. *If it will not be*, if what I ask will not be done.

214–5. *poor hurt fowl . . . sedges*. In this piece of bird-lore, as again in III. i. 24–5, it is the Shakespeare of Stratford, rather than of London, whose voice is heard.

219–21. *apt . . . person*. The alliterative effect of the repetition of 'p' and 'b' in these lines is noticeable.

220–1. *base though bitter*, 'willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike'.

S.D. *F* here makes only Don Pedro enter; *Q* adds Hero, Leonato, Don John, Borachio, and Conrade. There is no dramatic reason why Don John and his retainers should not return at this point from the banquet. But they do not speak till the next scene, and they evidently are not present while the arrangements about Hero's marriage are being discussed. For though Leonato fixes the ceremony for 'Monday . . . which is hence a just seven-night' (ll. 386–9), Don John at the end of the next scene tells Borachio, 'I will presently go learn their day of marriage' (l. 59). Hence *Q* must be wrong in including them here.

The question of whether Hero and Leonato enter here or after l. 278, as in *F*, is more difficult. It is true, as some editors have urged, that it is unnatural for Hero and her father to stand by silent while Don Pedro and Benedick debate whether the former has wooed her for himself or for Claudio.

On the other hand, Benedick speaks of 'this young lady' (l. 230). Unless the text is incorrect, the words can only refer to Hero present on the stage. Moreover, when Beatrice enters after l. 288 she does not come straight from the banquet with Hero and Leonato. She had been sent by Don Pedro (like Benedick in l. 195) to look for Claudio, who had lingered behind after the dance, for she announces (ll. 304–5), 'I have brought Count Claudio whom you sent me to seek'. Hence it has seemed preferable to follow the arrangement of *Q*, by which Hero and Leonato enter with Don Pedro after l. 223, while Beatrice and Claudio enter together after l. 278.

227. *LadyFame.* Benedick has a fondness for the title 'Lady'. Beatrice is 'Lady Disdain', and 'Lady Tongue'. Here Fame, in its Virgilian sense of 'report' or 'rumour' is personified with a similar title. In *The Mer. of Ven.* III. i. 7–8, Salarino personifies 'Report' in homelier fashion, 'if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word'.

228. *a lodge in a warren*, a game-keeper's lodge. The comparison is suggested by the desolate surroundings of such a lodge, but it lacks the aptness of most of Benedick's similitudes. It is curious that Shakespeare nowhere else uses the word 'warren', though 'warrener' occurs in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. iv. 28.

251–2. *quarrel to you*, cause of complaint against you.

252–3. *the gentleman . . . by you.* This gentleman is, of course, Benedick himself. Beatrice has put her own interpretation on her partner's strictures.

260. *duller . . . thaw.* This somewhat singular expression is of Benedick's own invention. Beatrice had merely called him 'a very dull fool' (ll. 147–8).

261. *impossible conveyance*, incredibly deft manipulation. Cf. l. 15.

262. *a man at a mark.* A reference to the marksman who stood near the butts and gave aim to the archers.

268. *had left him*, had bestowed upon him by his Creator.

272. *the infernal Ate*, the goddess of discord, whose birthplace is hell. Cf. *Jul. Caes.* III. i. 271, 'Ate . . . come hot from hell'.

273–4. *some scholar would conjure her*, would exorcise her in Latin. So when the Ghost appears in *Hamlet* (I. i. 42), Marcellus cries, 'Thou art a scholar: speak to it, Horatio'.

274–8. *for certainly . . . follows her.* There is a curious

twist here in Benedick's logic: He wishes the infernal Ate back in hell, not because she causes turmoil on earth, but because her absence from hell makes it an abode of peace.

277-8. *go thither, so indeed . . . follows her.* Modern editors put a semicolon after 'thither', and commas before and after 'indeed'. But this obscures the meaning of the passage, which is that people sin in order to go to hell, so completely do disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her to earth and leave hell free.

282. *the Antipodes*, the dwellers on the opposite side of the globe. The *N.E.D.* gives the phrase here its modern interpretation of locality, but Shakespeare seems always to use it of the inhabitants, not the place. Cf. *Mer. of Ven.* v. i. 127–8:

> We should hold day with the Antipodes
> If you would walk in absence of the sun,

and *Rich. II*, III. ii. 48–9:

> Who all this while hath revelled in the night
> Whilst we were wandering with the Antipodes.

284. *toothpicker.* This and the surviving form were both current in Elizabethan English.

285. *Prester John*, a fabulous Christian king who was supposed to reside in the Far East. Mandeville relates that this monarch, after seeing a service conducted by priests, declared 'he would no more be called Kinge nor Emperour but preest, and he would have the name of him that came first out of the prestes, and he was called John'. Purchas applies the name to the King of Abyssinia, whose title, 'Prestigian', was easily deflected and altered to priest John.

286. *the Great Cham*, the Khan or ruler of the Mongols.

287. *the Pigmies*, a mythical race of dwarfs located by different writers in 'mountaines of Inde', in 'mountains in the North side', and south of Ethiopia.

289. *Harpy.* The spelling of *F* with a capital is preferable, for Benedick is again identifying Beatrice with a mythological figure.

294–300. On this passage, see *Introduction*, p. xxvii.

297. *use*, interest. By uniting her heart with his Beatrice had doubled it.

312–3. *civil count, civil . . . orange.* The pun on 'civil' and 'Seville' was even more obvious in Elizabethan English than

to-day, owing to the spelling, 'a civil orange'. Cotgrave (as Dyce points out) defines *Aigre-douce* as 'A ciuile orange; or, orange that is between sweet and sower'. This exactly expresses Claudio, who is 'neither sad nor sick, nor merry nor well'.

315. ***blazon***: strictly a description of armorial bearings; here ironically used of Beatrice's 'appreciation' of Claudio.

324. ***all grace***, 'he who is the fountain of all grace' (W. A. Wright). The use of 'grace' in this sense is frequent. There are two instances in *All's Well*, I. iii. 228, 'By grace itself I swear', and II. i. 163, 'The greatest grace leading grace'. The play on words in the latter passage, and in *Macbeth*, v. vii. 101, 'by the grace of Grace', though somewhat mechanical, is preferable to Leonato's unctuous pun.

336. ***poor fool.*** A striking use of the phrase as one purely of endearment, without any sense of pity, and in application to an inanimate object.

337. ***keeps on the windy side of care***, keeps to the windward of care, and thus has the advantage of it. The metaphor is a nautical one.

339. ***cousin.*** Claudio already addresses Beatrice as a relative.

340. ***Good Lord, for alliance!*** Probably a retort to Claudio's familiar 'cousin'. 'Good lord, here have I got a new kinsman by marriage' (Malone). 'Alliance' seems to be used by Shakespeare not for marriage but for the relationships which marriage produces. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.* II. iii. 91–2:

> For this alliance may so happy prove,
> To turn your household's rancour to pure love.

J. C. Smith points out that Bacon distinguishes between 'marriage' and 'alliance' in *The New Atlantis*, 'What is marriage to them but a very bargain; wherein is sought alliance, or portion, or reputation?'

340–1. ***goes . . . to the world.*** To 'go to the world' = to be married, and 'a woman of the world' in *As You Like It*, v. iii. 5, is 'a married woman'. The origin of the phrase is uncertain, but it is used of both sexes. The Clown in *All's Well*, I. iii. 21, says to the Countess, 'if I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may'.

341. ***sunburnt***, scorched, and thus ill-favoured. Cf. *Tro. and Cress.* I. iii. 282–3 :

> The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth
> The splinter of a lance.

342–3. ***heigh-ho for a husband*** : the title of a ballad. Wright compares Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 565, ' Hai-ho for a husband, cries she, a bad husband, nay the worst that ever was is better than none '.

354. ***no matter***, nothing serious. In ' matter and impertinency mixed ', *Lear*, IV. iv. 179, there is a somewhat different contrast, not with mirth but with nonsense.

363–4. ***By your Grace's pardon.*** Beatrice apologizes to Don Pedro for the breach of etiquette in quitting the royal presence.

376. ***out of suit.*** There is a play on ' suit ' in the senses of a ' love-suit ' and ' a legal action '.

386–7. ***Monday . . . which is hence a just seven-night.*** From this statement we learn that the action of the play has opened on a Monday, and we are able to date, more or less exactly, all the scenes that follow.

II. ii. A front-stage scene. While it is in progress the back part of the stage is being cleared of the properties used in the masked-ball scene, and is probably being re-transformed into an orchard. The time is either Monday, late at night, or Tuesday in the morning, as Don John has just heard of Hero's engagement, but not of the ' day of marriage '.

2. ***shall***, is to. The modern sense of the word here would be exactly opposed to Don John's meaning.

12–3. ***a year since.*** This is one of the touches by which the action of the play, compressed into little more than a week, is set against a background of earlier episodes. Cf. I. i. 318–21 and II. i. 298–300.

19–20. ***life . . . death.*** Another of the forced antitheses which are typical of Don John's frigidly studied speech.

45. ***hear Margaret term me Claudio.*** Theobald first raised the question whether ' Claudio ' was the right reading here. ' In the name of common sense,' he asks, ' could it displease Claudio to hear his mistress making use of *his* name tenderly ? If he saw another man with her, and heard her call him Claudio, he might reasonably think her betrayed, but he could not have the same reason to accuse her of disloyalty. Besides,

how could her naming Claudio make the Prince and Claudio believe that she loved Borachio, as he desires Don John to insinuate to them that she did?' He therefore substituted 'Borachio' for 'Claudio', and he has been followed amongst others by Steevens and by Collier in his second and third editions. Capell, Halliwell-Phillipps, R. G. White, and W. A. Wright are amongst those who have defended the original reading. Wright observes, 'The text must be right, for it was necessary to the plot to make it appear that Hero was endeavouring to conceal her intrigue with Borachio. It was also necessary to induce Margaret to take part in it innocently, and she would at once have suspected something if she had allowed Borachio in his own name to address her as Hero.' J. C. Smith points out that Shakespeare has adopted the 'plan of doubling the make-believe' in Ariosto's account of the episode where Dalinda dresses in Genevra's clothes (cf. *Introduction*, p. vi). 'Margaret is induced to personate Hero (in fun) by Borachio personating Claudio.'

50–1. *jealousy . . . assurance*, suspicion . . . certainty. A capital instance of the difference in meaning between the Elizabethan and the modern sense of 'jealousy'.

58–9. *I will . . . marriage.* See note on S.D. after II. i. 223.

II. iii. A full-stage scene as in I. i. If, as is probable, the serenade which Don Pedro orders for 'to-morrow night . . . at the Lady Hero's chamber-window' (ll. 97–8) is intended for her bridal eve, the time of this scene is Saturday evening.

S.D. In his first edition Collier has the note: 'In the old copies Benedick enters alone before the boy makes his appearance; and the reason is obvious, for Benedick should ruminate and pace to and fro before he calls the boy. In all modern editions "Benedick and a Boy" enter together; a very injudicious arrangement.' Nevertheless in his second edition Collier unwisely adopted this 'very injudicious arrangement'.

3. *a book.* Another proof of Benedick's literary tastes, which are abundantly illustrated in his speeches.

5–7. *I am . . . here again.* The boy means that he will be 'no time' in executing his errand. Benedick affects to take him literally. *Q* and *F* print *Exit* after l. 5, though it is obvious that the boy does not go out till after 'again' in l. 7. This is due to the fact that Elizabethan printers insert entrances and exits only at the end of prose speeches. Hence

this is the nearest point at which the boy's exit could be marked.

17–19. *ten mile afoot . . . ten nights awake.* The euphuistic alliterative balance is again noticeable.

20–4. *He was wont . . . strange dishes.* Benedick is here as contemptuous of figures of speech as Henry V when he talks to Kate 'plain soldier' (*Henry V*, v. ii. 155). But the King's language is really simple, while Benedick, with all his wit and vivacity, is really more 'fantastical' in speech than Claudio, even when the latter is in love.

22. *orthography.* The use of the abstract noun indicates the completeness of Claudio's conversion.

36–7. *noble . . . angel.* A trite pun on the names of the two Elizabethan coins worth respectively 6*s.* 8*d.* and 10*s.* 0*d.*

40. *Monsieur Love.* Another of the fancy titles of which Benedick is fond.

S.D. *Enter . . . Claudio.* *Q* adds 'Musicke', but this appears to be an anticipation of 'Enter Balthaser with musicke' after l. 45. On the 'Iacke Wilson' of *F* see *Introduction*, pp. xxxiii–iv.

43–4. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.* v. i. 56–7:

> soft stillness and the night
> Become of the touches of sweet harmony.

47. *fit the hid-fox with a penny-worth.* None of the explanations of 'kid-foxe', the reading of *Q* and *F*, is satisfactory. The emendation by Warburton has therefore been adopted, with the interpretation given to it by Capell, who pointed out that the reference is to a boy's game of the 'hide-and-seek' type. In *Hamlet*, iv. ii. 32–3 the Prince leaves the stage crying 'Hide fox, and all after', probably meaning that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are to pursue him as boys do the 'hid-fox' in the game. The phrase exactly suits Benedick, who has been spied hiding in the arbour. Halliwell-Phillipps illustrates 'fit with a penny-worth' from R. Bernard's translation of Terence (1614), '*De te sumam supplicium*, I will take my penie-worths of thee; I will punish thee'.

51–2. 'It is always a proof of excellence to disclaim recognition of its own perfection.'

60. *not a note.* For the play on words cf. i. i. 174–6.

61. *crotchets*, a play on the two senses of 'musical notes' and 'whims'. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.* iv. v. 120.

62. *Notes . . . nothing*: another pun obscured in modern pronunciation. 'Nothing', as J. C. Smith points out, rhymes with 'doting' in *Sonnet* xx, ll. 10 and 12.

63–4. *divine air . . . sheeps' guts.* A stringed instrument evidently here begins the accompaniment to Balthasar's song. If 'music' in the S.D. before l. 46 means (as often) a band of musicians, the accompaniment was played by several instruments.

64–5. *ravished . . . hale . . . out*: a play on 'ravished' in its two senses of 'delighted' and 'pulled forth'. For the idea of music drawing the soul from the body cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. iii. 62–3, 'a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver'.

76. *ditties.* In Elizabethan English, 'ditty' denotes the words of a song. Cf. *As You Like It*, v. iii. 36, 'There was no great matter in the ditty, but the note was very tunable', and *Soliman and Perseda*, I. ii. 12–13:

> When didst thou sing a note that I could heare,
> But I have framed a dittie to the tune?

mo: used before plural nouns, or nouns of plural significance. Here 'ditties' is to be understood.

77. *dumps*, melancholy tunes, to which the 'ditties' of l. 76 are the words. Cf. *Two Gent. of Ver.* III. ii. 85, 'Tune a deploring dump'.

88. *a shift*, a makeshift.

92. *night-raven*: a mythical bird of ill omen, mentioned generally with the owl, e. g. Spenser, *Epithalamion:*

> Let not the scriech owle nor the storke be heard,
> Nor the night Raven, that still deadly yells.

Goldsmith in his *Animated Nature*, ii. 185 (1852 edition), quoted by Furness, identifies the night-raven with the bittern. 'I remember in the place where I was a boy with what terror the bird's note affected the whole village; they considered it the presage of some sad event; and generally found or made one to succeed it . . . If any person in the neighbourhood died, they supposed it could not be otherwise, for the night-raven had foretold it.'

95. *Yea, marry.* These words are probably not addressed to Balthasar, but form the close of a short 'aside', during Benedick's last speech, betwen Don Pedro and Claudio, who has doubtless suggested the serenade.

97. *music.* See note on ll. 63–4.

to-morrow night. The serenade appears to be intended for the eve of Hero's wedding. As this is fixed for the Monday after the betrothal (II. i. 386–7) the present scene seems to fall on Saturday. The plan of the serenade prepares the audience for the presence of the Prince and Claudio by night below Hero's window, even before Don John's proposals in Act III. ii. 117 ff.

104–5. *Stalk on . . . fowl sits.* The fowler used to shelter himself behind a stalking-horse. Sometimes a piece of old canvas, shaped into the form of a horse and stuffed and painted, was used.

126 *you, you.* (1) the ethical dative, (2) addressed to Claudio, as the next speech shows.

135. *white-bearded fellow.* Though Don Pedro had planned the trick upon Benedick, the working out of it is left mainly to Leonato, because Benedick would naturally believe him to know Beatrice's state of feeling through Hero.

137–8. *hold it up,* keep up the trick. Cf. *M. N. D.* III. ii. 239, 'hold the sweet jest up'.

158. *That,* that was so, precisely. Claudio's interpolation would come in more naturally after a question (cf. *Jul. Caes.* II. i. 15, 'Crown him ?—that'). Hence Capell put a note of interrogation after l. 157, but it is not necessary, especially as Leonato continues the story in his next speech.

160. *halfpence*: made of silver, and thus very small.

168–9. *prays, curses . . . patience.* The exclamation is certainly not a curse. Hence Collier in his second edition substituted 'cries' for 'curses', and has been followed by some editors. But the antithesis with 'prays' is thus sacrificed. There is more to be said for Halliwell-Phillipps's transposition, 'curses, prays'. But Claudio was perhaps too much occupied in drawing a vivid fancy-picture to be entirely logical.

179. *alms*: used in its original singular sense.

191–2. *daffed all other respects,* put aside all other considerations. Don Pedro's only allusion to his royal rank.

205–6. *a good outward happiness,* an agreeable exterior.

226. *counsel.* The context shows clearly that the word is used in the sense of reflection, not of advice from others.

234. *walk,* withdraw, retire.

dinner. This, as J. C. Smith has pointed out, is a slip on Shakespeare's part, for it is evening (cf. I. 43). Dinner in

the Elizabethan age was an early meal. William Harrison says (*Description of England*, II. vi. 166, ed. Furnivall), 'With vs the nobilitie, gentrie, and students doo ordinarilie go to dinner at eleven before noone, and to supper at five or betweene five and six at afternoone'.

242. ***and no such matter***, and there is nothing of the kind. Cf. I. i. 205.

243. ***a dumb-show***. As the use of 'scene' in l. 242 proves, Shakespeare is here alluding to dumb-shows on the stage. Elaborate examples of these precede each Act in *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, three of the tragedies presented by gentlemen of the Inns of Court. So too 'the play within the play' in *Hamlet* is introduced by a dumb-show (III. i. 147 ff.), which, as Ophelia rightly guesses, 'imports the argument of the play'.

247. ***the conference was sadly borne***, the discussion was seriously carried on.

250. ***have their full bent***, are at extreme tension, like a bow stretched to the uttermost.

269. ***career***, the full charge or course. A metaphor from the lists. Cf. v. i. 138.

279. ***for those thanks***, to win those thanks.

285. ***stomach***, appetite. Beatrice is surprised at Benedick lingering to exchange compliments with her, instead of hurrying in to dinner.

286–8. ***Against my will . . . in that.*** Beatrice's words might be twisted into meaning that she would have preferred to deliver the message voluntarily, instead of being sent.

ACT III

Scene i. The scene is the same as in Act II. iii. But a day has probably intervened. The previous scene was apparently on Saturday (cf. note on II. iii. 97), and this takes place on Sunday (cf. l. 101) in the daytime.

1. ***run thee.*** Abbott points out (*Shak. Gram.* § 212) that the use of 'thee' instead of 'thou' in such phrases is not reflexive, but euphonic.

7. ***pleached bower.*** See note on I. ii. 11.

13. ***leave us alone.*** 'Margaret is thus quietly excluded from the delicate trick played on Beatrice. She is too boisterous

and too nearly concerned in a more dangerous plot' (J. C. Smith).

23. ***only wounds by hearsay***, wounds by only hearsay. Cf. II. i. 148.

24–5. ***lapwing . . . Close by the ground.*** Shakespeare is fond of alluding to this bird's peculiarities, either real, as here and in *Com. of Err.* IV. ii. 27, or fictitious, as in *Ham.* v. ii. 193–4, 'This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head'.

30. ***woodbine***: here identified with honey-suckle (l. 8), though in *M. N. D.* IV. i. 47–8 they are distinguished.

45. ***at full.*** *Q* and *F* have 'as full', but there is no satisfactory interpretation of these words, whether they be taken to qualify 'as fortunate' or (with the punctuation of the later Folios, 'as full, as fortunate') 'a bed'. Probably the printer mistook 'at' for 'as', thinking the comparison would immediately follow 'deserve' instead of being preceded by an adverbial phrase. 'At full' is used by Shakespeare in the sense of 'fully, completely'. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.* I. i. 43, 'be thou at full ourself'.

48. ***yielded***, granted (without the modern implication of surrender).

58. ***lest she'll.*** The construction is unusual, but it is more forcible than the 'lest she' of *F*, and has therefore been retained.

60. ***rarely featur'd***, finely shaped.

61. ***spell him backward.*** An allusion, as Steevens points out, to the supposed practice of witches in saying prayers.

65. ***an agate.*** Small figures were cut in agates for seals. In two other places Shakespeare uses the agate as an emblem of smallness. In *2 Hen. IV*, I. ii. 18, Falstaff says of his page, 'I was never manned with an agate till now'. In *Rom. and Jul.* I. iv. 56, Mercutio describes Queen Mab as 'in shape no bigger than an agate-stone'.

70. ***simpleness***, simplicity, integrity, with reference to 'truth' in l. 69. 'Simplicity,' as used by Shakespeare, is a term of contempt, 'silliness'. Cf. *Sonnet* lxvi. 11, 'simple truth miscall'd simplicity'.

purchaseth. 'Purchase' is a legal term, used of the acquisition of land otherwise than by inheritance.

72. ***from***, contrary to.

76. ***press me to death.*** A reference to the legal penalty of *peine forte et dure.*

84. *honest slanders*, untrue charges, but not affecting her honour.

101. *every day to-morrow.* Hero probably means that from to-morrow she will always be married. The 'why' is an exclamation of protest at an unnecessary question. But 'every day' may perhaps = 'any day, immediately'. Collier quotes from Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, iv. v. 64–6: '*Goldstone.* When shall I see thee at my chamber, when? *Fitzgrave.* Every day, shortly.' With this interpretation a comma or, preferably, a dash should follow 'day'.

102. *some attires.* Special attention is directed to Hero's dresses. Here she promises to show them to Ursula, and at the beginning of Scene iv she discusses with Margaret which of them she will wear at her marriage. The introduction of these details is probably due to the fact that Margaret disguises herself for the purpose of the plot in Hero's garments (v. i. 250).

107–16. Beatrice's emotion is symbolized by the lyrical form of this speech, which, with an additional quatrain before the final couplet, would be a Shakespearian sonnet.

110. Probably 'these qualities do not shelter glory', though the meaning may be 'these qualities are not praised in their owner's absence'.

112. A reference to ll. 35–6.

116. *better than reportingly*, on better grounds than hearsay.

III. ii. A front-stage scene. The time is Sunday, soon after the preceding scene.

1–2. In i. i. 161 Don Pedro had announced that he would stay with Leonato 'at the least a month'. It is, therefore, probable that his declaration here is merely intended to lead up to a mock request for Benedick's travelling companionship.

2. *consummate.* Wright points out that here and in *Meas. for Meas.* v. i. 383, the word is used of the completion of the marriage ceremony.

6–7. *show . . . wear it.* Steevens compares *Rom. and Jul.* iii. ii:

> So tedious is this day
> As is the night before some festival
> To an impatient child that hath new robes
> And may not wear them.

8. ***only***, qualifies Benedick. Cf. II. i. 148 and III. i. 23.

11. ***cut Cupid's bow-string.*** Here Don Pedro represents Benedick as having disarmed Cupid. Beatrice (I. i. 43) had spoken of him as the love-god's rival in archery.

12. ***hangman***, rascal. Cf. *Two Gent. of Ver.* IV. iv. 61, 'hangman (*Ff.* Hangmans) boys'. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 12, Cupid is called 'a shrewd unhappy gallows', i. e. gallows-bird. Thus he figures both as the executioner and his victim —to identical effect.

19–20. ***truant . . . true.*** For the linking of these two words J. C. Smith compares *Sonnet* ci. 1–2:

> O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
> For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?

22. ***I have the tooth-ache.*** Steevens compares Beaumont and Fletcher's *The False One*, II. iii. 109–10, 'You had best be troubled with the Tooth-ache too, For Lovers ever are'.

25. ***hang . . . draw.*** Another jesting reference to the severities of Elizabethan criminal law. Cf. III. i. 76.

32–3. ***fancy . . . a fancy.*** A play on the two meanings of 'love' and 'individual taste'.

33–8. ***strange disguises . . . no doublet.*** In this passage Don Pedro is really making mock not of 'Signior Benedick of Padua', but of a typical Elizabethan gallant like 'Falconbridge, the young baron of England', who, before coming to woo Portia, had 'bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany' (*Mer. of Ven.* I. ii. 79–80). In *As You Like It*, IV. i. 36, there is a similar hit at the travelled Englishman's delight 'to wear strange suits'. The prose satirists of the time, e. g. Dekker in *The Seven Deadly Sinnes*, and Lodge in *Wit's Miserie*, give even fuller details of this affectation.

On the omission of 'or in the shape . . . no doublet' in *F*, see the 'Note on the Text', p. xlv.

39–40. ***fancy to this foolery . . . no fool for fancy.*** Another euphonistic balance of phrase. 'Fool for fancy' = fool owing to love.

48–9. ***the old ornament . . . tennis-balls.*** Claudio's gibe gains its point from what was an actual practice. Cf. *Rum Alley*, III. i, 'Thy beard shall serve to stuff those balls, by which I get me heat at tennis'.

58–9. ***wash his face***, i. e. use cosmetics. Furness quotes

appositely from Greene's *A Quippe for an Vpstart Courtier* (Works, ed. Grosart, xi. 247) a passage describing 'Velvet-breeches' at the barber's, where his head is 'curiously washt with no woorse then a camphire bal'.

63–4. *now crept . . . new-governed by stops.* Walker had good reasons for his view (*Crit. Exam.* ii. 214) that the repetition of 'now' before 'crept' and 'governed' in *Q* and *F* was a printer's error. He therefore proposed to read 'now crept . . . and new-governed', and this emendation has been adopted by Dyce in his later editions, and by Hudson. But the passage gains in point if 'new' is substituted for the first 'now' instead of the second. 'Stops' are the frets on the finger-board of the lute or other stringed instrument, which tune the strings. There is a play on 'stop' in its sense of cessation or 'check'.

63. *a lute-string.* Claudio here makes the lute the symbol of Benedick's love-melancholy, as Benedick had associated Claudio's passion with 'the tabor and the pipe' (II. iii. 16).

72–3. *She shall be buried with her face upwards.* If this reading is correct, Malone may be right in his interpretation, which was suggested by Steevens's reference to *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii. 132–1:

> Not like a corse; or if,—not to be buried,
> But quick and in mine arms.

As Perdita here speaks of Florizel being 'buried quick' (i. e. 'alive') in her arms, so Don Pedro, playing upon 'dies' in l. 71, prophesies that Beatrice will be 'buried' alive in the arms of Benedick. But it is doubtful if an audience would read this meaning into the words, nor is it quite suitable to the mocking spirit of the dialogue here. Theobald suggested that the true reading was 'with her heels upwards'. To be buried with the heels upwards or with the face downwards betokened a penal form of interment, especially for suicides. Thus Don Pedro would imply that Beatrice's suicidal folly in loving Benedick would meet with its proper punishment. Hanmer and Capell accepted this emendation, which gives a very satisfactory sense. But it is difficult to see why *Q* and *F* should have substituted the more unfamiliar phrase if it had not manuscript authority.

74. *charm for the tooth-ache.* The 39th of the *Hundred*

Merry Tales relates how a gentleman by means of a mock charm cured his cook of tooth-ache.

77. ***hobby-horses***, buffoons. In all other places where the word is used by Shakespeare of persons it means 'a wanton woman', e. g. *Love's Labour's Lost*, III. i. 33 and *Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 276. The hobby-horse was one of the figures in the morris-dance.

80. ***Margaret.*** Claudio is evidently unaware that it is Ursula who has been Hero's accomplice in the trick played on Beatrice in the previous scene.

85. ***Good den***, good ev'n. According to Nares, this salutation was used as soon as noon was past.

101. ***aim better at me***, form a truer estimate of me.

108. ***circumstances shortened***, cutting short all circumlocution.

114. ***paint out***, depict in full.

120. ***love her, then to-morrow.*** Editors since Hanmer have placed the comma after 'then', but the change, though plausible, is not essential.

136. ***coldly***, coolly.

III. iii. A full-stage scene, showing the outside of the church (l. 96) and a pent-house (l. 111), probably attached to Leonato's house. The time is Monday in the small hours.

7. ***their charge.*** It was the duty of the constable to give the watch their charge. Malone quotes from Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, III. i. 86–7: 'Come on, my hearts; we are the citie's securitie. Ile give you your charge, and then, like courtiers, every man spye out.'

10. ***constable.*** This office, involving the leadership of the watch, and the carrying of the lantern, is of course quite distinct from Dogberry's office of petty constable, or 'Conservator of the Peace'.

15. ***well-favoured***, handsome.

43–4. ***how sleeping should offend.*** Halliwell-Phillipps (*Memoranda*, p. 52) quotes a passage from Parke's *Curtaine-Drawer of the World* (1612), describing how 'some great personage', saluted by watchmen at night, 'began to commend our diligence and care and good attendance, when before his face sate halfe of our company asleep, leaning their heads against their bils, and their billes against the wall'.

45. ***bills.*** The bill was a weapon with a wooden handle and an axe-shaped head.

71. *a child cry in the night.* Steevens quotes various sections from the *Statutes of the Streets* (1595), among them, 'No man shall after the hour of nyne at night, keep any rule, whereby any such suddaine outcry be made in the still of the night, as making any affray, or beating his wyfe, or servant, or singing, or revyling in his house, to the disturbaunce of his neighbours, under payne of iiis. iiii*d.*'

86. *statutes.* Most modern editors have adopted the reading of *F*, 'statues', Furness even declaring that it is 'unquestionably Dogberry's own word, let the reading of the Quarto, or of innumerable Quartos, be what it may'. But Dogberry is less likely to have made a mistake in a familiar legal word than in the high-sounding phraseology which is dear to him. The general character of the text of *F* makes it much more probable that we have here simply a misprint than an ingenious correction which has no parallel in *F*'s other departures from *Q*.

93–4. *keep . . . your own.* Part of the oath of a grand juryman: 'The King's counsel, your fellows' and your own you shall observe and keep sacred'.

96. *here upon the church-bench.* The bench was in the church porch. Evidently the outside of the church, within which Act iv. i takes place, forms part of the setting of this scene.

99. *Signior Leonato's door.* Leonato's house also forms part of the setting, and the 'pent-house' or projecting shed spoken of in l. 111 was probably attached to it. Hero's chamber-window, outside which took place the plot described by Borachio in ll. 153 ff., is supposed to be in the part of the house invisible from the stage.

103. *What.* An exclamation of impatience, frequently used in calling to persons.

106. This indication that the night is pitch-dark, and the reference in l. 112 to the drizzling rain, are touches that help to explain the success of Don John's plot.

107. *my elbow itched.* An omen of evil near, like the pricking of the witch's thumb in *Macbeth*.

108. *scab*, a scurvy fellow, with a play on the usual meaning. For a similar play cf. *Cor.* i. i. 170–2.

112–13. *like a true drunkard.* Furness is probably right in his view that the allusion here is to the proverb 'in vino veritas'. But Borachio may be further punning on his name,

which equals Spanish *borracho*, drunk. Barnabe Barnes in *The Divels Chamber*, v. ii, speaks of 'A *Borrachio* armed all in sacke'.

121. ***any villany should be so rich.*** 'Conrade means "act of villainy", Borachio means "villain", using the abstract for the concrete, a figure of which Shakespeare is very fond. His point is "You need not wonder that an act of villany should cost so much, but rather that any scoundrel should be able to afford it"' (J. C. Smith).

126–7. ***Thou knowest . . . man.*** Taken in connexion with ll. 140–7, these words seem to mean that men are ready to adopt any fashion. This sudden introduction of the topic of dress is apparently intended to lead up to the account of Margaret masquerading in Hero's garments, but Conrade's interruptions, and Borachio's inability to keep to the point, turn the conversation into by-paths.

132. ***deformed***, deforming, disfiguring. Cf. *Com. of Err.* v. i. 299–300:

> And careful hours, with Time's deformed hand,
> Have written strange defeatures in my face.

135. ***thief.*** Borachio has spoken of fashion as a thief, in the sense of one who robs men of their natural appearance. The watchman interprets the word professionally.

143–7. ***like Pharaoh's soldiers . . . tapestry.*** One would scarcely have expected a man of Borachio's type to be so observant of artistic details. Shakespeare's references to art are so comparatively rare that it is curious to find in these few lines mention of painting, stained glass, and tapestry. The association of subjects from the Bible, the Apocrypha, and classical mythology is typical of the Renaissance. 'Pharaoh's soldiers' probably appeared in a painting of their overthrow in the Red Sea, and 'god Bel's priests' in a window representing their destruction after the discovery of their imposture, though the window can scarcely have contained the whole 'three score and ten'. The 'shaven Hercules' is in contrast to the usual representation of the hero 'with his great beard' (cf. *Mer. of Ven.* III. ii. 85, 'The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars'), but the allusion has not been satisfactorily identified. Halliwell-Phillipps quotes from an inventory of the 'hangings' at Kenilworth in 1588 'six peeces of the historie of Hercules'.

151. ***shifted out of.*** The phrase keeps up the metaphor of a change of dress.

160. ***possessed*:** 'intermediate in meaning between "influenced", as in "possessed with a fury" (I. i. 206), and "informed", as in "Possess the people in Messina here How innocent she died" (v. i. 294–5)' (J. C. Smith).

161. ***the orchard.*** See note on I. ii. 11.

183. ***a lock***, a love-lock, worn under the left ear. These locks were denounced by Prynne as 'growne too much in fashion with comly pages, youthes, and lewd, effeminate, ruffianly persons.'

190–1. ***a goodly commodity . . . bills.*** A complicated play upon the legal and commercial senses of these words: (*a*) a valuable haul, being arrested by these men's weapons; (*b*) a valuable piece of merchandise obtained on credit by these men's bonds.

192. ***A commodity in question***, a bargain of doubtful quality, subject to examination.

III. iv. A front-stage scene. The time is almost five o'clock (l. 53) on Monday morning.

6. ***rebato.*** In most of the quotations collected by Halliwell-Phillipps the word means a wire-support for a ruff, e. g. Dent's *Pathway to Heaven*, p. 42, 'What say you to these great ruffes, which are borne up with supporters and rebatoes, as it were with poste and raile?' and Moryson, *Itinerary III*, Bk. IV, i. 165, 'long ruffes with rebatoes of wire to beare them vp'. But the word seems also to have been used of the ruff itself, e. g. Dekker's *Guls Hornbook* (ed. Grosart), p. 211, 'Your stiffnecked rebatoes that haue more arches for pride to row vnder, then can stand vnder fiue London Bridges', and this suits the context better here. Editors since Hanmer have adopted the spelling 'rabato', but there is no need to alter the form of the word in *Q* and *F*, which is often found.

G. Macdonald, *Orts*, p. 151 (quoted by Furness), makes the ingenious suggestion that Margaret's objection to Hero's wearing this rebato may be due to the fact that she 'had dressed in her mistress's clothes the night before. She might have rumpled or soiled it, and so feared discovery'. However this may be, this talk about women's dress, like that on men's fashions in the previous scene, is evidently suggested by the part that clothes played in the deception of Claudio. There is dramatic

irony in Margaret's light-hearted discussion of the details of the attire that Hero is to wear at the wedding, which by dressing up in her mistress's robes the girl has unwittingly frustrated.

13. *tire*, head-dress, here evidently of false hair. Cf. Moryson, *Itinerary*, vol. iv, p. 254 (Maclehose), 'Gentlewomen virgins . . . goe bareheaded, with their haire curiously knotted, and raised at the forehead, but many against the cold (as they say) weare caps of haire that is not their owne'.

within. This seems to refer to the inner trimming of the head-dress. It can scarcely mean, as has been suggested, 'in an inner room', for Margaret is evidently fingering and talking over different items of apparel that are lying about in Hero's apartment.

15–6. *the Duchess of Milan's*. Is this 'the Duchesse of *Millayne*' mentioned by Lyly in *Euphues and his England* (Works, ii. 53), whose love 'a young Gentleman' obtained?

17. *exceeds*: used absolutely with much the same meaning as the modern colloquialism, 'beats everything'.

18. *night-gown*: not a night-dress, but a gown worn over it. Cf. *Macbeth*, v. i. 6, 'I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her'.

19–22. *cloth o' gold . . . tinsel*. These sumptuous details have many parallels in the inventories of theatrical garments in the accounts of the Revels' Office. Shakespeare and his fellows must have been thoroughly familiar with matters of the kind. See Feuillerat, *Documents of the Revels Office*, *passim*.

19. *cuts*, 'indentations on the edge of a gown, showing an inlay of different material. Distinguished from "slashes" which were in the body of the garment' (J. C. Smith).

20–2. *set with pearls . . . tinsel*. 'Side sleeves' seem to be here long sleeves hanging from the shoulders. Laneham, in the *Entertainment at Kenilworth*, p. 50, speaks of a gown 'with syde sleevez dooun to midlegge'. But no mention has been found of 'down sleeves', and Steevens's reading has therefore been adopted, omitting the comma after 'pearls' and taking 'down' as a preposition. The gown is thus described as set with pearls down the arm-sleeves, the hanging shoulder sleeves, and the skirt, and lined underneath with a bluish tinsel. But Margaret is such a breathless 'rattle' that the correct interpretation must remain doubtful.

30. *marriage honourable in a beggar.* Shakespeare probably had in mind either the words in the Church Service, 'holy matrimony, which is an honourable estate instituted of God', or the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, xiii. 6, 'Marriage is honourable in all'.

32–3. *say . . . husband.* The punctuation adopted is that of the Cambridge editors, whose view is that 'Margaret means that Hero was so prudish as to think that the mere mention of the word "husband" required an apology'. Many editors from Pope downwards have punctuated, 'say (saving your reverence) "a husband",' but this makes Margaret use the apologetic phrase of her own accord instead of at Hero's instigation.

33–4. *an bad . . . true speaking*, unless evil thoughts misconstrue honest words.

45. *Clap 's into*, then strike up. 'Clap into' is used of starting a song briskly. Cf. *As You Like It*, v. iii. 8 ff.:

> *Touch.* Come sit, sit, and a song . . .
> *First Page.* Shall we clap into 't roundly?

's = us, the dative, not the accusative.

Light o' love: a lively dance tune, as is shown by Shakespeare's previous mention of it in *Two Gent. of Ver.* i. ii. 80–2:

> *Jul.* Best sing it to the tune of 'Light o' Love.
> *Luc.* It is too heavy for so light a tune.
> *Jul.* Heavy! belike it hath some burden, then?

The words of the original song are not extant, but it is mentioned in a *Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, 1578, and there is an undated 'very proper dittie' by Lenard Gibson to the tune of 'Lightie Love'.

46. *burden*, bass or undersong. 'Margaret says that the song goes without a burden because there was no man or men present on the stage' (Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, p. 222). There is a play also on 'heavy' in the dialogue above; cf. the lines just quoted from the *Two Gent. of Verona*.

48. *Yea.* The 'Ye' of *Q* and *F* is in all probability corrupt, for though Beatrice addresses Margaret as 'you' in ll. 69, 72, and 78, she could not use 'ye' in speaking to her alone. Moreover, the verbal use of 'Light o' love' is awkward. Capell's conjecture of 'Yea' has been adopted, though it is

possible that the manuscript reading was 'y^e', and that the printer mistook it for 'Ye'.

50. *barns*. This word for child (a dialectical form of 'bairn') is used twice elsewhere by Shakespeare. The Shepherd in *The Wint. Tale*, III. iii. 70–1, on finding Perdita, cries 'Mercy on 's, a barne; a very pretty barne'; and the Clown in *All 's Well*, I. iii. 28, quotes the saying, 'Barnes are blessings'. Probably Beatrice, in her punning use of this pronunciation, is also quoting a proverbial saying.

51. *construction*, interpretation.

51–2. *I scorn that with my heels*. Cf. *Mer. of Ven.* II. ii. 9–10, 'scorn running with thy heels'.

53. *five o'clock*. For a parallel for so early an hour for a marriage, J. C. Smith quotes from *The Puritan*, v. i. 7–8, 'Hie thee, 'tis past five; bid them open the church dore; my sister is almost ready'. He points out that 'morning marriages are a relic of the Roman Catholic practice of taking the nuptial mass after the ceremony; the mass was taken fasting'.

56–7. The letter 'h' and the noun 'ache' were pronounced alike. Beatrice plays upon this, and on the two senses of 'for', (1) with desire of, (2) because of.

58. *turned Turk*, become a renegade from your vows of celibacy.

59. *the star*, the pole-star. Cf. *Son.* cxvi. 7, 'the star to every wandering bark'.

60. *trow*, i.e. I trow, I wonder.

63–4. *gloves ... an excellent perfume*. J. C. Smith compares the line in Autolycus' song about his wares (*The Wint. Tale*, IV. iii. 222), 'Gloves as sweet as damask roses'.

65. *I am stuffed*, I have a heavy cold.

69. *professed apprehension*, become expert in quickness of wit.

70. *it*. 'The "it" does not refer to "apprehension" with the meaning of quickness of wit, as Beatrice uses it, but to apprehension in its more usual meaning of *seeing clearly*. Thus understood, the speech of Margaret is an allusion to the deception on Beatrice which the latter failed to "apprehend" or see through' (Furness).

74–5. *Carduus Benedictus*. W. A. Wright quotes from Cogan's *Haven of Health* (1584), Ch. 46, a description of the 'notable effects' of '*Carduus benedictus*, or blessed Thistell, so worthily named for the singular virtues that it hath'.

79. *moral*, hidden meaning.

91–2. *eats his meat without grudging*, acquiesces in the common lot of man.

97. *a false gallop*, an artificial canter, here used with a play on the two senses of 'false'. Touchstone calls doggerel 'the very false gallop of verses', *As You Like It*, III. ii. 120.

98–101. *the prince, the count . . . to church.* By taking part in the bridal escort, Don Pedro and Claudio keep up appearances to Hero till the last minute.

III. v. A front-stage scene. The time is soon after five o'clock on Monday morning.

18. *palabras.* Dogberry's exclamation, like Sly's 'paucas pallabris' (*Tam. of the Shrew*, Ind. i. 5), is a perversion of the Spanish 'pocas palabras' = few words. The phrase had been made notorious by Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedie*, III. xiv. 118.

22. *the poor duke's officers.* Dogberry means the duke's poor officers. But it is Shakespeare himself who seems to blunder in speaking of 'the Duke'. He seems to have forgotten that the Prince of Arragon is also the ruler of the Sicilies (cf. 'the prince's own person', III. iii. 81–2), with Leonato as his representative in the governorship of Messina.

38–9. *when the age . . . out.* Dogberry's own variant of the proverb, 'When the wine [or the ale] is in, the wit is out'.

39. *it is a world to see*, it is wonderful to see. Cf. *Tam. of the Shrew*, II. i. 305.

41. *God's a good man.* Another proverbial phrase. Cf. *Lusty Juventus*, p. 73 (Hazlitt-Dodsley), 'He will say that God is a good man'.

58. *Drink some wine ere you go.* See *Introduction*, p. xxxvii.

64. *Francis Seacoal.* This is doubtless 'the sexton' who takes part in the examination in IV. ii. Francis Seacoal cannot be the same person as George Seacoal of III. iii. 11–12, because the latter is the second watchman who is appointed 'constable of the watch', and gives evidence against Conrade and Borachio in IV. ii. 52–4.

65. *to examination.* The use of the noun for the verb is to be accepted on the superior authority of *Q*, though it is not one of Dogberry's most characteristic or amusing blunders.

69. *here's that.* Dogberry taps his forehead.

70. *non-come*, i.e. *non compos mentis*, but Dogberry means *non plus*.

ACT IV

SCENE i. A full-stage scene. The scene is about six o'clock on Monday morning.

1. *be brief.* Leonato is fussily eager to hurry through the ceremony. Thus in l. 9 he explains away the bridegroom's unexpected 'No', and in l. 19 takes the answer out of his mouth. His impatience thus helps to precipitate the catastrophe.

12–14. The friar's exhortation is closely modelled on that in the Marriage Service, 'I require and charge you both . . . that if either of you know impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it'.

20–1. *not knowing . . . do.* The omission of this clause in *F* is doubtless due to the compositor overlooking a fourth exclamation ending in 'do'.

22–3. *Interjections . . . ah! ha! he!* Benedick's pun upon 'interjections', with his quotation from the grammar-book, is another instance of his fertility of illustration. His choice of examples 'of laughing' has an ironical effect in view of what is to follow. More in keeping with the situation would have been Sir Tophas's exclamation in Lyly's *Endymion*, III. iii. 5–6: 'An interjective, whereof some are of mourning: as *ebo*, *vah*.'

24. *Father.* The use of this word also has an ironical effect. But the contract of betrothal established a more formal connexion in the Elizabethan period than now. Cf. ll. 49–51.

31. *render her again.* The double meaning in Don Pedro's words gives Claudio the cue for repudiating his betrothed.

39. *modest evidence*, evidence of modesty.

47. *in your own proof*, in your own trial of her virtue.

51. *she did embrace me as a husband.* The betrothal contract seems to have been often regarded in Elizabethan England as virtually equivalent to the marriage ceremony. Thus Claudio in *Meas. for Meas.* I. ii. 155 ff. claims that he has done Juliet no wrong:

> She is fast my wife,
> Save that we do the denunciation lack
> Of outward order.

52. *the 'forehand sin*, the sin of anticipation.

58. *Out on thee! Seeming!* With this repunctuation of the text, Claudio first exclaims against Hero, and then apostrophizes 'seeming' = hypocrisy, as Isabella does, in *Meas. for Meas.* II. iv. 151, 'Seeming, seeming!' But it must be admitted that though this reading gives a satisfactory sense, it involves a complete departure from the punctuation of *Q* and *F*, and it makes Claudio address Hero as 'thee', though in the succeeding lines he uses 'you'. The first of these difficulties is obviated if we read 'Out on thee, seeming' = Out on thee, playing the hypocrite, but the use of 'it' after this construction is awkward. Knight conjectured 'Out on the seeming!' and this is not impossible.

write against it, denounce it. Cf. *Cymbeline*, II. v. 32–3:

> I'll write against them,
> Detest them, curse them.

70. *True.* Hero echoes in amazement the last word of Don John's speech.

80–1. *catechizing . . . name.* As earlier in the scene Shakespeare has used the words of the Marriage Service, here he is evidently referring to the Church Catechism.

84. *Hero itself.* The name Hero (by which Borachio had addressed Margaret).

95–6. This 'confession' was apparently made by Borachio between his dialogue with Margaret and his account of the episode to Conrade. Cf. III. iii. 167–70, 'partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged'.

101. *thy.* It is noticeable that though Don Pedro has addressed Hero as 'you', Don John permits himself to use the over-familiar second person singular. Claudio also, who has hitherto, with the possible exception of l. 58, used 'you', in the speech that follows addresses Hero throughout as 'thou'.

106. With this conceit, the outcome of a revulsion of feeling, Furness compares Juliet's ejaculations after she hears of Romeo's slaying of Tybalt, e. g. *Rom. and Jul.* III. ii. 75–6:

> Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
> Dove-feather'd raven! wolvish-ravening lamb!

124. *that is printed in her blood*, that reveals itself in the

'thousand blushing apparitions' of which the friar speaks in l. 161.

128. *on the rearward of reproaches*, after reproaches had been exhausted. The metaphor is from an army with reserve forces in its rear. Cf. *Sonnet* xc. 5–6:

Ah! do not, when my heart hath 'scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe.

129–31. Furness aptly compares old Capulet's words, *Rom. and Jul.* III. v. 165–7:

we scarce thought us bless'd
That God had lent us but this only child;
But now I see this one is one too much.

130. *frame*, arrangement, plan.

141. *Valuing of her*. Making comparison of her with myself.

157–60. These lines are printed in *Q* (which is followed by *F*) in prose form as follows: 'Heare me a little, for I haue only bin silent so long, & | giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by noting of the lady, I | haue markt.' It is doubtful whether, as the Cambridge editors believed, the type was 'accidentally dislocated'; or, as P. A. Daniel suggests in the Introduction to Praetorius's facsimile of *Q*, the lines were compressed to get them into the page, the next page having been already set up by another compositor. In any case Daniel appears to be right in his view that there is no *lacuna*. In the case of so good an authority as *Q* a *lacuna* should only be postulated, if the text defies interpretation. But this is not the case here, though Daniel's arrangement is unsatisfactory. He suggests:

Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have marked...

This gives 'by' a force that it will not bear, and it breaks the smooth flow of the verse. Editors have been misled by taking 'only' as an adverb, to be followed by a causal sentence, instead of as an adjective = alone. The lines should be arranged:

Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune.
By noting of the lady I have mark'd...

The friar appeals for a hearing on the ground that he alone among the company has hitherto kept silence, and has let this train of events run its course.

164–6. *a fire . . . truth.* This metaphor of a fire in which the errors of heretics will be purged away is appropriate on the lips of the friar, though it seems scarcely suitable to the gentle Hero.

167–8. *observations . . . doth warrant.* 'Observation' would balance better with 'reading', and has been adopted by many editors. But if *Q* and *F* are right, the singular 'doth' is probably due to the intervention of 'seal'.

168–9. *Which . . . my book*, which attest with the seal of experience the results of my study. 'Tenour' is a law term, 'the copy of an instrument not fully set out, but containing only the substance or purport of it' (Onions).

188. *have the very bent of honour*, stretch honour to its utmost limits. Cf. note on II. iii. 250.

190. 'John the bastard has brought the plot into being.'

199. *such a kind.* The reading of *Q* and *F* is almost certainly corrupt, not only because of the unpleasant jingle in the rhyming of 'kind' with 'find' in this line and with 'mind' in l. 200, but because the meaning of 'kind' must be strained, if the passage is to be made intelligible. 'Curse' has been suggested by Capell, and adopted by some later editors, but no conjectural reading here can be really satisfactory.

204. The reading of *Q* and *F* cannot be lightly set aside, for it is intelligible, and the punctuation shows clearly how it is to be interpreted. But there are three objections to it. (1) Hero is not a 'princess', though the friar might possibly give this title to the daughter of the Governor, as Claudio is counted among the 'princes'. (2) There is no reason why Hero should be doubly described as 'your daughter' and 'the princess'. (3) The clause 'left for dead', standing by itself, is not sufficiently definite. Theobald's emendation has therefore been adopted. But instead of putting a full stop or colon at the end of the line, it is preferable to take 'the princes left for dead' as a relative clause with 'whom' understood, and thus to preserve the flow of rhythm unbroken in ll. 204–6.

207. *a mourning ostentation*, a show of mourning.

209. *Hang mournful epitaphs.* It was the custom to affix

poetical epitaphs to monuments on graves. Cf. John Eliot, *Poems*, p. 39, in an elegy on the Marchioness of Winchester:

Let others the sad *Epitaphs* invent,
And paste them up about thy moniment.

211. ***What shall become of this?*** What will be the consequence of this?

226. ***idea***, mental image; almost a Platonic use of the word.

227. ***his study of imagination***, the study of his imagination, his imaginative reflections.

228. ***organ***. The word blends here the two senses of 'instrument' and 'part of the body'. For the latter cf. *Mer. of Ven.* III. i. 60–4, 'hath not a Jew hands, organs', &c.

230. ***moving-delicate***. On the whole it is preferable to take these words as a compound epithet, 'touchingly delicate'. But they may be each an independent epithet.

full of life. The repetition of 'life', already used in ll. 226 and 228, is intended to point the contrast with Hero's assumed death. But the use of 'life' in l. 228 for 'being', and in this line for 'vitality', is awkward.

233. ***had interest in***, had a claim to possession of. The use of the phrase is legal.

liver: the supposed seat of passion.

239–41. 'But if we should not hit the mark in any other respect, at least the belief that the lady is dead will allay the excitement caused by her wantonness.'

251. ***flow in***, am melted away in. 'Flow', as used by Shakespeare, has often the sense of 'overflow', 'abound in to excess'.

254. Furness compares *Hamlet*, IV. iii. 9–10:

diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd.

261. Even in her grief Beatrice cannot resist giving a twist to Benedick's words. He had meant 'I should wish you not to weep', but she interprets it as 'I will not ask you to do that', and answers, 'You need not; I do it of my own accord'.

270. 'These words are not to be regarded, as by some they have been, as spoken in Beatrice's usually sarcastic vein. She only means that being neither a kinsman, nor in any way connected with Hero's family, he cannot step forward to do her right. In this sense the words are understood by Benedick, who takes the most direct way of removing the difficulty by

the avowal of his love' (Lady Martin, *Shakespeare's Female Characters*, p. 320).

273. ***as the thing I know not***, as I don't know what. Beatrice probably starts to say 'as strange as that I love you', but breaks off into this non-committal phrase.

278. ***Beatrice, thou.*** After Beatrice's thinly veiled avowal of her feelings, Benedick at once calls her by her name (a privilege of which he makes the most throughout the rest of the scene), and uses the affectionately familiar 'thou'.

279. ***Do not swear and eat it***, Do not swear and eat your oath. The reading of *F* obscures the sense.

288. ***stayed***, delayed, interrupted, by asking for what offence Beatrice desired forgiveness.

290. ***And do it,*** do it then.

307. ***a'***. Modern editors, by adopting Rowe's substitution of 'he' for the contemptuous 'a'' of the original texts, have weakened the force of Beatrice's outburst.

310. ***bear her in hand***, keep up pretences to her. The play upon 'hand' in this phrase and in 'take hands' matrimonially gives edge to Beatrice's sarcasm.

323. ***count.*** The use of 'testimony' suggests a pun on 'count' in its sense of 'accusation'. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. vii. 17, 'Why to a public count I might not go'.

323–4. ***Count Comfect.*** A further double play upon these words in the senses of (1) made-up, counterfeit accusation, and (2) a sugar-plum nobleman. Hence the further quibble, 'a sweet gallant'.

327. ***curtsies.*** Most editors modernize the 'cursies' of *Q* and *F* into 'courtesies'. But Beatrice is evidently thinking of 'obeisance', as in II. i. 57.

328–9. ***only turned into tongue***, turned into tongue only.

329. ***trim***, fine, with the same ironical sense as 'proper'.

337. ***Think you in your soul.*** In this solemn adjuration Benedick reverts to the more formal second person plural.

343. ***By this hand***: probably here the hand of Beatrice.

IV. ii. A front-stage scene. The time is early on Monday morning.

S.D. ***Sexton.*** On the substitution of this word for the Town Clerk of *Q* and *F* see *Introduction*, pp. xxxvi–vii.

1. The prefix in *Q* and *F* is *Keeper*; in l. 5 it is *Andrew*, and l. 11 it is *Kemp*. These speeches, and those to which *Kemp*,

Kem, *Kee*, or *Ke* are afterwards prefixed, are manifestly by Dogberry. Hence it is evident that Kemp played this part, and that *Q* was printed from a play-house copy, in which his name was entered before Dogberry's speeches. *Keeper* seems to be merely a blundering expansion by the printer of *Kee*. But *Andrew* is baffling. The current explanation that it was a nickname of Kemp from his playing the part of Merry Andrew is far from convincing. It is most unlikely that such a nickname would be prefixed to a single line while his real name was used throughout the rest of the scene. The printer has probably misread the manuscript. Though Kemp appears here accidentally, he figures as a character in more than one Elizabethan play. In Part II of *The Return from Parnassus*, IV. iii, he is introduced together with Burbage; in John Day's *Travels of Three English Brothers* he turns up suddenly in Venice and talks with Sir Anthony Shirley. On the title-page of the anonymous *A Knacke to Knowe a Knave* (1594) 'Kemps applauded Merriments of the men of Goteham, in receiving the King [Edgar] into Goteham' are mentioned as a special feature of the play.

2. The prefix in *Q* and *F* here and in l. 6 is *Cowley*, the name of the actor who played the part of Verges. On the general points suggested by the mention of Kemp's or Cowley's names here see *Introduction*, pp. xxxii–iii.

2–3. ***a stool and a cushion for the sexton.*** These words are so irrelevant to Dogberry's question that Malone may be right in suggesting that they are intended to ridicule Hieronimo's order in *The Spanish Tragedie*, IV. iii. 16, 'Bring a chaire and a cushion for the King'.

7. ***exhibition.*** The usual Elizabethan sense is an 'allowance', but it is here substituted by Verges for 'commission' or some kindred word. Cf. Leonato's instruction to Dogberry, III. v. 54, 'Take their examination yourself'.

16. ***a gentleman.*** Conrade is insulted at being called 'sirrah'.

20–3. On the omission of these lines see the 'Note on the Text', p. xlv.

30. ***go about with***, circumvent.

34–5. ***they . . . tale***, they both tell one story.

56. *Verg.* *Q* and *F* have *Const.*, which is sometimes prefixed to Dogberry's speeches, e. g. in l. 73, and in III. v. 57, but never to those of Verges. Possibly the manuscript had

Cow or *Cou* for *Cowley*, and the printer misread the prefix, and expanded it wrongly.

66–7. ***Prince John . . . away.*** He had doubtless heard of the arrest of Borachio and Conrade, and knew that the plot would be unmasked.

67–8. ***in this manner accused, in this very manner refused.*** The euphuistic balance and assonance are noticeable.

73–5. *Q* reads :

> *Constable.* Come let them be opinioned.
> *Couley.* Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe.

F has substantially the same text, except that it gives the second line to *Sexton*, and spells *Coxcombe* in italics as if it were intended to be a proper name. The editors of *F* apparently recognized that Verges could not call his partner ' coxcomb ', but their emendation is very unhappy, for the phrase was equally inappropriate on the lips of the Sexton, who moreover had evidently made his exit after l. 72, though this is not marked in *Q* or *F*. It was Warburton who first saw that ' of Coxcombe ' = ' Off, Coxcomb ' (for ' of ' = ' off ' cf. v. i. 97), and that these words were spoken by Conrade, while ' Let them be in the hands ' belonged to another speaker. This speaker he and later editors have taken to be Verges. But the prefix *Couley* of *Q* is probably a mistake, as in l. 80, for *Conrade*. There is no instance in *Q* of a prefix being omitted (as Warburton's arrangement implied), though they are often incorrect. The printer of *Q* has apparently not only used the wrong prefix, but has given part of Dogberry's speech to Conrade (misnamed Cowley). In the present text the words are restored to Dogberry, and Conrade's outburst gains in dramatic force if it immediately follows the master constable's order, without the intervention of Verges. Possibly Dogberry wishes to say ' in the hands of the prince's officers ', or some such phrase, when he is interrupted by Conrade. But more probably ' hands ' is a misprint for ' bands ', due to the printer's misinterpretation of the following ' of '.

78–9. ***Come, . . . varlet !*** *Q* has only a comma after ' them ', and thus does not make it clear that ' thou naughty varlet ' is addressed to Conrade. *F* omits the comma, as if the words were addressed to a member of the watch.

90–1. ***as pretty . . . Messina.*** Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. v. 30, ' as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria '.

94. *two gowns.* A reference to his official dress. Cf. the S.D. at the beginning of this scene in *Q* and *F*, 'Enter the Constables . . . in gownes'.

ACT V

SCENE i. Probably a front-stage scene. It cannot be located precisely, but it appears to be a street through which the constables have to pass with their prisoners from the jail to Leonato's house. The time is Monday morning, immediately after Act IV. ii.

10. Hanmer and some later editors read 'speak to me', which would be metrically correct, and may be right. But as this may be 'a broken line, natural in passionate speech' (J. C. Smith), the text of *Q* and *F* has been retained.

12. *strain.* The senses of 'emotion' and an echoing 'musical note' appear to be blended here.

16. Of the numerous emendations of this line none need be considered which do not accept 'sorrow wag' as correct. Capell's conjecture of 'Bid' for 'And' involves the change of only two letters, and has been adopted in the text. It is possible, however, that Johnson was right in reading 'And, Sorrow wag! cry; hem when he should groan'. This has the advantage of retaining the words of *Q* and *F*, though the separation of 'cry' from 'hem' is more than an ordinary change of punctuation. But the rhythm of 'And, Sorrow wag! cry' is extremely harsh.

17–18. *make . . . candle-wasters.* Either (*a*) drink away sorrow with midnight revellers or (*b*) stupefy sorrow with the discourses of scholars. The second interpretation has in its favour the general character of ll. 20 ff., and Ben Jonson's use of 'candle-waster' as = 'a book-worm' in *Cynthia's Revels*, III. ii. 3. On the other hand (*a*) suits better with 'drunk' and obviates the elliptical use of 'candle-wasters'.

18. *yet.* 'I suppose that the train of thought in Leonato's mind is "it will be very hard to find such a man *yet* if you do, bring him to me"; and then, his thoughts growing clearer, he asserts outright "there *is* no such man!"' (Furness).

24. *preceptial medicine*, medicine consisting of precepts.

28. *wring*, writhe. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III. vi. 78, 'He wrings at some distress'.

30. *To be so moral*, to be so ready with moralizing. Cf. *As You Like It*, II. vii. 31:

When I did hear
The motley fool thus moral on the time.

32. *cry louder than advertisement*, drown the voice of admonition.

33. Antonio takes 'cry', in l. 32, literally.

37. *the style of gods*, 'exalted language: such as we may suppose would be written by beings superior to human calamities' (Steevens).

38. *made a push at*, attacked, set at defiance.

46. *Good den.* The day is still early, but Leonato uses the afternoon salutation.

49. *Are you so hasty now?* This probably refers to the Prince's earlier promise to 'stay here at the least a month' (I. i. 161).

53. *thou.* Leonato uses the pronoun of contempt to Claudio.

62. *to thy head.* For this phrase = 'to thy face', cf. *Mid. Night's Dream*, I. i. 106, 'Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head'.

65. *bruise.* For the metaphor here Wright compares, 'My unbruised youth', *Rom. and Jul.* II. iii. 37.

82. *Win me and wear me*: an alliterative proverbial saying.

answer me, i.e. with his weapon. 'Answer' (the noun) is a technical term in fence. Cf. *Twel. Night*, III. iv. 308, and *Ham.* v. ii. 283.

91. *Jacks*: cf. note on I. i. 198.

94. *fashion-monging*, who exploit the fashions. As parallel forms, e.g. 'money-monging', 'law-monging', are found in Elizabethan English, there is no need to adopt the modernized 'fashion-mongring' of the later *Ff.* 'These fashion-mongers' is used in *Rom. and Jul.* II. iv. 35.

96. *and show.* There is no need to omit 'and', as Dyce and others have done. The stress on 'antique' (cf. III. i. 63) and 'antiquely' in Elizabethan English was on the first syllable; '-ly' is elided before 'and'.

97. *speak off.* For the spelling 'of' in *Q* and *F*, where 'off' seems to be meant, cf. IV. ii. 75.

dangerous, threatening.

102. *wake your patience*, rouse your patience into rage. Cf. *Cor.* III. i. 97–8, 'awake Your dangerous lenity'.

123. *high-proof*, in the highest degree. The metaphor is probably from the proving or testing of a weapon.

130–2. *I will . . . pleasure us.* 'Just as we bid minstrels draw their instruments from the cases to give us pleasure, so I bid you draw your wit from the scabbard for the same purpose.'

135–7. *courage . . . care killed a cat . . . kill care.* The alliterative balance is noteworthy.

138. *in the career*, in full onset. Cf. II. iii. 269.

141. *staff*, lance-shaft.

142. *was broke cross.* It was dishonourable for a tilter to have his lance broken crosswise instead of lengthways against his opponent's shield. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. iv. 41 ff., 'he . . . swears brave oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover; as a puisny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose'.

143. *changes*, changes colour.

145–6. *turn his girdle.* The full form of this proverbial phrase was 'turn the buckle of his girdle'. Steevens quotes from Winwood's *Memorials*, i. 453, the reply of an Englishman in Paris to a rebuke by Winwood, 'If I were angry I might turne the buckle of my girdle behinde me'. J. C. Smith quotes Cromwell's saying (Sept. 17, 1656), 'If any man be angry at it—I am plain and shall use an homely expression: let him turn the buckle of his girdle behind him! If this were to be done again I would do it.' This quotation supports the interpretation, 'Let him employ himself till he cools down.' Another view is the phrase means 'to challenge', as belts were worn with the buckle before, but for wrestling it was turned behind, to give the adversary a fairer grip. But Claudio's exclamation in l. 148 shows that he had not been thinking of a challenge from Benedick.

158. *I'*. The 'I' of *Q* and *F* may be 'Ay'.

159. *a calf's head and a capon.* There is probably, as Capell suggested, a pun upon 'cap on', as in *Cymb.* II. i. 25, 'You are a cock and capon too, and you crow, cock, with your comb on'.

161. *woodcock*: the emblem of stupidity. Cf. *Ham.* v. i. 115, 'springes to catch woodcocks'.

171. *a wise gentleman*: apparently an ironical phrase for a simpleton, but no other instance of it seems to have been traced.

172. *hath the tongues*, can talk various languages. Cf. *Two Gent. of Ver.* IV. i. 33–4:

Sec. Outlaw. Have you the tongues?
Val. My youthful travel therein made me happy.

183–4. *if she . . . dearly.* Cf. *Euphues* (Lyly's Works, I. 138), 'I haue hearde that women either loue entirely or hate deadly'.

184–5. *The old man's . . . all.* An echo of II. iii. 125–6, 'My daughter tells us all'. But the courtly Prince would scarcely have spoken of Hero in this way before her defamation.

186–7. *God . . . garden.* With this profane reference to *Genesis* iii. 8, Claudio alludes to II. iii. 40 ff.

188–91. The reference is to I. i. 280–7.

207–9. *when he goes . . . his wit.* The point of the jest lies in the play on the literal and metaphorical senses of 'leaves off'. 'Man cuts a pretty figure, when he divests himself of his intelligence, and attires himself only in his clothes.'

210–11. *He is then . . . man.* 'He is then as far surpassed by an ape in wisdom, as he exceeds an ape in stature.'

212. *let me be*, leave me alone.

212–13. *pluck up, my heart, and be sad*, rouse thyself, my heart, and be grave. The apostrophe, occurring in the midst of Don Pedro's banter, sounds like a quotation from a contemporary play. Just before the revelation of the plot, the Prince gets an inkling that there is something amiss.

S.D. *Enter Dogberry . . . Borachio.* As this S.D. is placed by *Q* and *F* before l. 209, Furness thinks that we have here 'another proof of a stage copy, wherein the entrances of actors are set down, some lines before they actually enter, in order that the prompter may warn them to be in readiness'.

216. *reasons*: a pun on 'raisins', as in *1 Hen. IV*, II. iv. 214, 'If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries'.

218. *once.* The word has here a vaguely limiting sense, 'at any time', 'at all'.

235–6. *one meaning well suited.* 'One meaning put into many different dresses; the Prince having asked the same question in four modes of speech' (Johnson).

238. *bound to your answer*, under legal obligation to answer the charge against you; with a further play on 'bound' = (1) 'pinioned', and (2) on the way to (cf. ll. 241–2, 'let me go no further to mine answer').

250. *in Hero's garments.* 'This important touch is added for the first time in this, the last account of the midnight episode' (J. C. Smith).

252. *upon record*, set down in writing; a legal phrase.

253–4. *rather seal . . . my shame.* This euphuistic balance of phrase, with its transverse alliteration, is somewhat artificial in the mouth of Borachio.

298. *sing it to-night.* See note at opening of scene.

303. *she alone is heir.* This is part of Leonato's fiction. Antonio's son is mentioned in I. ii. 2.

307. *dispose.* This is usually taken to be a verb in the imperative mood, in which case there is a break in the construction after 'I do embrace'. But it may be a noun = 'disposal'.

310. *To-night.* See note at opening of scene.

312. *was pack'd*, was a confederate. Cf. *Com. of Err.* v. i. 210–11:

> The goldsmith here, were he not pack'd with her,
> Could witness it.

334. *God save the foundation!* The formula used by those who received alms at the gates of religious houses.

335. *I discharge thee of*, I unburden you of. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, II. iv. 145, 'Discharge yourself of our company'.

V. ii. Probably a full-stage scene, apparently laid in the orchard. As the Cambridge editors pointed out, it cannot be in Leonato's house, where Pope located it, for in l. 102 Ursula cries 'Yonder's old coil at home'. The time is Monday, in the later morning or the afternoon.

6–7. *so high a style . . . come over it.* The Elizabethan spelling 'stile' makes the pun upon the two senses of the word more evident; 'come over' is also used in the two senses of 'surpass' and 'get over'.

8. *comely*, befitting; suggested by 'come'.

9. *come over me*, take possession of me.

10. *keep below stairs.* Various examples of the phrase 'below stairs' collected by H. C. Hart from Ben Jonson and Chapman in *New Sh. Soc. Trans.*, 1877–9, p. 471, and quoted with further comments by Furness, indicate that it refers to the servants' quarters. Hence, Margaret seems to ask, 'Shall I always be a dependant?' But as a retort to Benedick's previous speech this lacks sufficient point for the

compliment that follows on her 'wit'. There is probably some quibble to which the clue is lacking.

17. *I give thee the bucklers*, I own myself beaten; a metaphor from sword-and-buckler play. Dyce quotes from Cotgrave's *Dictionarie*, '*Ie te le donne gaigné*. I grant it, I yield it thee; I confesse thy action; I give thee the bucklers.'

21. *put in the pikes with a vice*, put in the spikes with a screw. 'Pikes' were the detachable spikes in the centre of circular shields.

26–9. These lines are the beginning of a song by William Elderton. It must have been familiar before 1584, when, as Collier notes, a song on 'The ioy of Virginitie' appeared to this tune in *The Handefull of pleasant delites*. In this miscellany the title is quoted as 'The Gods of loue', but the metre and phrasing of 'The ioy of Virginitie' correspond with Elderton's song.

30–1. *Leander . . . Troilus*. These 'patterns of love' are coupled together with more elaborate irony by Rosalind in *As You Like It*, IV. i. 110.

33. *carpet-mongers*: a more derisive form of 'carpet-knights'. Another contemptuous variant is 'knight . . . on carpet consideration' in *Tw. Night*, III. iv. 260–1.

34. *in the even road of a blank verse*. Troilus was to be afterwards made a subject of Shakespeare's own blank verse, though 'run smoothly' and 'even road' are not phrases suitable to *Troilus and Cressida*. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, from which Shakespeare quotes a line in *As You Like It*, III. v. 82, is in couplets.

42. *festival terms*. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, I. iii. 46, 'holiday and lady terms'.

69. *epithet*, phrase. Cf. *Oth.* I. i. 14, 'stuff'd with epithets of war'.

82. *in the time of good neighbours*, i.e. when men praised one another.

84–5. *he shall live . . . weeps*, there will be no more lasting memorial of him than the tolling of his funeral bell and his widow's tears. The 10th and 11th of the *Hundred Merry Tales* satirize the shortness of a widow's mourning.

89. *Don Worm, his conscience*. Halliwell-Phillipps calls attention to an entry amongst the expenses for the Coventry Mysteries, 'payd to ij wormes of conscience, xvj^{d}'.

102. *old coil*, great disturbance.

110. *uncle's.* Rowe and some later editors have substituted 'uncle' for 'uncle's' of *Q* and *F*, but cf. 'to Leonato's', I. i. 222 and 296.

V. iii. Probably a front-stage scene. Pope located it in 'a church', and has been followed by later editors. But ll. 25–8 are much more appropriate if the monument is in a churchyard, out-of-doors. The time is from midnight on Monday to the earliest dawn of Tuesday.

3–11. *Q* and *F* preface ll. 4–11 with the heading *Epitaph* forming part of the same line as 'A Lord's speech'. It is possible that this lord or another attendant reads the epitaph for Claudio, but probably he does so himself. Capell's heading 'Claud. [reading out of a Scrowl]' has therefore been adopted in substance, though 'Epitaph' has been retained from *Q* and *F*.

8. ***with shame***, owing to shame.

10–11. This couplet is indented in *Q* and *F*, and probably does not form part of the Epitaph, but, like ll. 21–2, is a rhyming valediction by Claudio.

12. ***music***: probably here = 'musicians'. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 212, 'Play, music, then'.

sing your solemn hymn. The hymn is an addition to the ceremonial. Leonato had bidden Claudio sing the epitaph itself (v. i. 297–8).

13–14. ***night . . . knight.*** The rhyming of these words, as in *Mer. Wives of Wind.* II. i. 15–16, points to a difference of pronunciation between them in Elizabethan English.

14. ***virgin knight.*** Cf. *All's Well*, I. iii. 121–2, where Helena is called a 'poor knight' of 'Dian . . . queen of virgins'.

21–2. The parallelism of these lines with 18–19 and the repetition of 'Heavily, heavily' make it clear that 'uttered' here = proclaimed, commemorated. l. 21 may thus be rendered 'till the death-dirge be sung'. Hence it is not necessary to discuss interpretations which explain 'uttered' as 'ousted' or 'expelled', or which are based on *F*'s misprint in l. 22, 'Heavenly, heavenly'.

26. ***prey'd.*** With the constant play upon words throughout *Much Ado*, Don Pedro, as he leaves the church, may here be punning upon 'pray'd'.

26–8. Shakespeare had already pictured a similar dawn

of day with greater detail and intensity in *Rom. and Jul.* II. iii. 1–4:

> The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,
> Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
> And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
> From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.

See note at the beginning of the scene.

33. ***speed's***. Though this contraction for 'speed us' is somewhat harsh, a wish is so much more natural on Claudio's lips here than a prophecy, that 'speeds' in *Q* and *F* probably = 'speed 's'.

V. iv. A full-stage scene. As so many characters appear in the scene, and it contains much movement, ending with a dance, it probably takes place in the hall of Leonato's house, like II. i. The time is Tuesday morning.

20. ***undo***: a play on the two senses of 'unfasten' and 'ruin'.

43. ***he thinks . . . bull.*** Cf. I. i. 280–7 and v. i. 188–91.

46–7. Shakespeare may have read the story of Europa in Golding's version of the *Metamorphoses*, Book II; he had already drawn upon Book VIII for the story of Baucis and Philemon (II. i. 102–3).

54, 56–7. *Q* and *F* give these lines to Leonato. But in view of ll. 15–16 Theobald and most later editors have transferred 54 to Antonio. This is almost certainly correct, but, if so, 56–7 should be similarly transferred.

63. ***died defil'd.*** *F's* omission of the epithet is probably merely a printer's error, and it is surprising to find Furness inclined to defend the omission on the ground that 'the few words in the next line are an adequate reference to the past'. Nor is there any difficulty in Hero's use of the epithet, as the Hero who died is merely a creature of the imagination.

76. ***for they swore.*** On the grounds of metre, construction, and parallelism with l. 79, Capell's addition of 'for' before 'they' has been adopted. *Q* and *F* have 'deceiued' in this line, which suggests that the last syllable was to be stressed, but 'deceiu'd' in l. 79.

84. ***cousin.*** See note on I. ii. 2.

86–8. Probably the ill-rhymed verses whose endings Benedick had quoted in the orchard (v. ii. 36–41).

97. ***a consumption.*** 'This is the only place where Shake-

speare uses this word apparently in its modern sense. Timon's use of it, "Consumptions sow in hollow bones of men", is less appropriate, and Lear's "Consumption catch thee!" is less definite' (Bucknill).

98. Theobald was right in giving this line to Benedick, though *Q* and *F* prefix 'Leonato'. 'Stop your mouth' is a customary Elizabethan phrase for 'Kiss you'. Cf. II. i. 332, 'stop his mouth with a kiss'. Benedick's action accounts for Don Pedro's exclamation in the next line, which recalls I. i. 287.

103–5. ***if a man . . . about him***, if a man is to allow himself to be beaten by a shower of ridicule, he will have to dispense with anything ornamental about him—be it clothes or a wife.

112–13. ***my cousin.*** Benedick, like Claudio in II. i. 339, immediately claims kinship with the relations of his affianced bride.

116–17. ***out of thy . . . double-dealer***, out of your bachelor life into matrimony; with a play on 'double-dealer' = an unfaithful husband.

126–7. ***no staff . . . horn.*** The allusion is probably to the staves used by elderly people, which were often tipped with a cross-piece of horn.

S.D. ***Dance.*** This is the only play of Shakespeare that ends with a dance.

APPENDIX I

STRUCTURE AND STAGING OF THE PLAY

A. Structure

The structure of *Much Ado about Nothing* (as has been shown in the *Introduction*) is determined largely by the manifold changes that Shakespeare rings upon the title. Three plots are interwoven, each illustrating a different type of 'much ado about nothing', and there are minor variations on the theme.

In the opening scene the two main 'actions' are set in motion by the tongue-fence between Benedick and Beatrice, and by Claudio's announcement of his love for Hero. Don Pedro's offer to impersonate Claudio at the masked dance, and to woo Hero for him in disguise, starts the series of misunderstandings which have been traced in detail (*Introduction*, pp. xvii–xviii), and gives Don John the chance of practising his first deceit upon Claudio. The Count's readiness to believe that Don Pedro is playing him false prepares the audience—according to a favourite Shakespearian device—for his grosser credulity when the honour of his affianced bride is in question. But the earlier misunderstanding is short-lived and the marriage is fixed 'hence a just seven-night'. Thereupon Don John, at Borachio's suggestion, lays his second and deadlier plot (II. ii).

While he seeks to frustrate the marriage of the 'romantic' hero and heroine, Don Pedro and his friends form a conspiracy to bring about the union of the protagonists in the comic action. In II. iii and III. i, Benedick and Beatrice are in turn successfully tricked by the plotters, including Claudio and Hero, who are serenely unconscious of the machinations that have been set on foot against themselves.

In III. iii, exactly the middle of the play, the action is complicated by the introduction of the underplot of the Watch. As has been shown in the *Introduction* (pp. xxxvii–

xxxviii), it does not only add to the humours of the comedy but is necessary to the final solution of the entanglements. Meanwhile it contributes the element of dramatic irony. The calamity that overwhelms Hero is the more poignant to the audience because they know that but for the circumlocution of Dogberry and Verges it might have been averted.

The opening scene of Act IV, in which the blow falls, is, as often in Shakespearian drama, the climax of the action. Emotion rises to wellnigh tragic intensity, marked by the much longer consecutive use of verse than elsewhere in the play. The repudiation of Hero by her wooer is not only the crowning scenic episode, but reacts upon the relations of Benedick and Beatrice, the last barrier between whom it breaks down.

This effected, Shakespeare hastens the revelation of Don John's villany. But the vapourings of Dogberry, the senile frenzy of Leonato and Antonio, the sprightly encounters of Benedick with Margaret and Beatrice, and Claudio's elegy over an empty tomb protract and diversify the interest, before all entanglements are straightened out in the final scene.

The structural compression that has brought Bandello's diffuse romance almost within the limits of the Classical 'unities' has been illustrated in the *Introduction* and the Notes.

B. Staging

Much Ado about Nothing is a typical product of the Elizabethan theatre, with its platform stage, of which 'a perspective view' is given in the Frontispiece to this volume.

'It had two proscenium doors, set slantwise, and above them a balcony. . . . Between the stage doors, hanging from the front of the balcony, was a curtain, called the "traverse", which divided the stage into an inner and an outer part. The middle stage was shielded from the rain by a lofty canopy, called the "heavens". . . .

'When the traverse was open, the whole stage made one scene, which took its location from the properties on the inner stage. When the traverse was closed, the front stage still remained available for scenes that required no properties —outdoor scenes, mostly, which happened "somewhere" in the open; but with traverse and stage-doors closed the front

stage might also represent a room, but a room without properties, a room "somewhere". While such scenes were acting, fresh properties could be set out on the inner stage behind the closed traverse. Thus, by a succession of front-stage scenes, or by skilful alternation of front-stage and full-stage scenes, a whole play could be acted without a break. A break was unavoidable only if two full-stage scenes came together.'[1]

The failure to recognize that there was no scene-shifting, in the modern sense, on the Elizabethan stage has led even so acute a critic as Spedding into error in his proposed rearrangement of the Acts in *Much Ado about Nothing*. In the present edition the arrangement of the Acts in the first Folio has been retained, together with the division into scenes adopted by the eighteenth-century editors.

But though full-stage and front-stage scenes can usually be distinguished, definite localization is often impossible. Instances of this in *Much Ado about Nothing* are II. i, where it is doubtful whether the scene is laid in the hall or the orchard of Leonato's house; and v. iii, where it may be either inside a church or in a churchyard. On the other hand, in II. iii Benedick's order to the boy to bring a book 'hither to me in the orchard'; in III. i Hero's similar reference to the orchard; and in III. iii the second watchman's words, 'let us go sit here upon the church bench', definitely localize the scenes. So, too, Ursula's announcement to Hero (III. iv. 98 ff.) that the bridal party have come to fetch her 'to church', and Dogberry's order to Verges (III. v. 71–2) to meet him 'at the gaol', indicate sufficiently the scene of IV. i and IV. ii.

The action of the play is continuous. Thus during the two short front-stage scenes, I. ii and iii, preparations could be made behind the traverse for the elaborate full-stage scene of the revels, II. i. So also during II. ii the stage could be set for the orchard scenes, II. iii and III. i. The further alternations between front-stage and full-stage scenes are indicated in the Notes, from which it will be seen that in the last Act there is some difficulty in distinguishing them.

Many of Shakespeare's plays contain much verbal 'scene-painting', but there is a minimum of this in *Much Ado about*

[1] From Appendix I by the General Editor in *Richard II* and *Macbeth* in this series.

APPENDIX I

Nothing. The only passages of the kind are those describing 'the pleached bower' (III. i. 7 ff.) and the dawn (v. iii. 26–8). These may be suggested by the absence of painted scenery, but it is important not to exaggerate the simplicity of Elizabethan stage-arrangements. All recent investigation proves that properties and costumes were much more elaborate than has been usually believed. In III. iv Shakespeare shows that he was familiar with the elegancies of feminine attire, though, of course, the parts of Beatrice and Hero were acted by boys.

Though there is little action in *Much Ado about Nothing*, it is rich in spectacular effects. The entry of the masked revellers, the orchard scenes, the broken-off nuptials, the examination in the gaol, the midnight mourning, and the dance that closes the play, form a varied series of stage-pictures that can never lose their attractive power.

APPENDIX II

SHAKESPEARE'S PROSE

In earlier volumes of this series Shakespeare's prosody has been discussed, especially in its relation to *Richard II* and *Macbeth*. As *Much Ado about Nothing* is predominantly a prose play, the opportunity may be taken of saying something about Shakespeare as a writer of prose.[1] For it should never be forgotten that the dramatist's achievements in this medium are as great as in verse, and are, from some points of view, even more wonderful. The genius for poetry was the dower of the Elizabethans, though none shared it in so supreme degree, or allied with such other powers, as Shakespeare. But prose did not come with equal facility or felicity to the pens of his contemporaries. There is, of course, a great body of Elizabethan prose of varied interest and attraction, but in the main it has a curiously tentative, experimental, fluctuating quality. The peculiarity of Shakespeare's prose, in all its varieties, is its precision and lucidity, its exact adaptation to the dramatist's immediate purpose.

In his earlier plays Shakespeare, as a rule, uses prose somewhat rarely. There is, however, one striking exception. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, his first comedy, more than one-third of the dialogue is in prose. Sir Sidney Lee has suggested that this was due 'to the influence of foreign example', as prose was the generally accepted instrument of Italian, and afterwards of French comedy, and had been transplanted to England by Gascoigne and Lyly.[2] However this may be, in the other early comedies and in the early history plays verse is predominant, and in *Richard II* and *King John* is solely used.

[1] The prosody of *Much Ado about Nothing* has been discussed by the General Editor of this series in his edition of the play in the 'Warwick Shakespeare' series, Appendix B.

[2] *A Life of William Shakespeare* (1915), p. 101 *n.*

APPENDIX II

It was in the last years of the sixteenth century that Shakespeare somewhat suddenly began to introduce prose largely into his plays. There is a remarkable contrast between *Richard II*, a purely poetic drama, and its sequel, *1 Henry IV*, with its wealth of comic prose scenes. In *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in the three comic masterpieces, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, prose continues to be extensively employed. But with the beginning of the great tragic period early in the seventeenth century Shakespeare's use of it becomes more intermittent. There is much prose in *Hamlet*, but comparatively little in the kindred tragedy of *Julius Caesar*. There is a similar contrast between *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, and between *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In his last period of authorship *The Winter's Tale* contains considerably more prose than the *Tempest* or *Cymbeline*. The plot or the characterization accounts for some of these differences, but not for all. Shakespeare's choice of one instrument or the other must often have depended on the mood of the moment. When he wrote *Much Ado about Nothing* he showed a more sustained preference for prose than at any other time.

But though it is not always clear why in particular scenes he chose prose in preference to verse, we cannot fail to note the almost unfailing mastery with which he adapted it to various uses and situations. In a discussion of Shakespeare's prose[1] Churton Collins distinguished five different styles: (1) the euphuistic, (2) the coarse colloquial prose, modelled on the language of vulgar life, (3) the prose of higher comedy, (4) prose professedly rhetorical, (5) highly wrought poetical prose.

The two last-named types are not found in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Shakespeare's rhetorical prose is found mainly in certain highly wrought passages of his English and Roman history plays, such as the king's speech in *Henry V*, IV. i, 'For though I speak it to you, I think the king is but a man, as I am', &c., or Brutus' address to the mob in *Julius Caesar*, III. ii, 'Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause; and be silent, that you may hear', &c.

[1] 'Shakespeare as a Prose Writer' in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, ccxlix, pp. 735–47.

APPENDIX II

The examples of poetic prose are rare. They occur chiefly in certain passages in the tragedies, where in the midst of prose dialogue the thought soars to a pitch where verse would be natural, but where the dramatist does not think well to change suddenly from one instrument to the other. The greatest of such passages is to be found in *Hamlet*, II. ii, where the Danish prince avows that 'this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory', &c. Others come from the lips of the distraught and outcast Lear.

The three other types of prose distinguished by Churton Collins are all illustrated in *Much Ado about Nothing*. But in the case of the first, the 'euphuistic', some discrimination is necessary. There are a few passages in Shakespeare's writings where he deliberately parodies Lyly's style—its transverse alliteration, its similes, and rhetorical questions. Such is Falstaff's exhortation to Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV*, II. iv, 'though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears', &c. Other affectations of speech, not strictly euphuistic, are caricatured in Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Osric in *Hamlet*.

But while Shakespeare had an eye for the extravagances of euphuism, and could turn them to ridicule, he had himself caught much of the infection of Lyly's style both for good and for ill. Lyly's clearness and precision are carried on and transfigured in Shakespeare's finer prose, but too much of his studied balance and word-play is often also retained. Nowhere is this more fully illustrated than in *Much Ado about Nothing*, as is abundantly evident from the Notes in this volume.

Colloquial prose takes varied forms in Shakespeare's hands. In the speech of citizens, clowns, messengers, servants, and women of the lower orders, it generally reproduces the vulgar idiom of the time, individualized by the dramatist's art. Launcelot Gobbo and Sly the tinker, Mistress Quickly, and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, are among those who use this vernacular, each after his or her own fashion. Of such racy speech there is little in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The dependants in the play, messengers, serving men, and waiting women have all caught something of the accent and diction of their superiors.

But there is a form of colloquialism 'with a difference' that Shakespeare is fond of putting into the mouth of half-

educated personages who make pretensions to elegance or profundity of speech. Such is the language of Bottom the Weaver, 'I will move storms, I will condole in some measure'; of ancient Pistol, though his mouthings are in verse, not in prose; and of Elbow in *Measure for Measure*, 'the poor duke's constable', who appears 'with two notorious benefactors' in charge. Dogberry and Verges are the classic mouthpieces of this grotesque medley of the vernacular and misunderstood 'inkhorn' terms.

But it is in the prose of high comedy that *Much Ado about Nothing* stands pre-eminent. There is no need to repeat here what has already been said on this point in the *Introduction*, pp. xxxix–xl. It will be enough to add that the claim here advanced for it does not rest upon the speeches of the protagonists alone. The wit of Falstaff cuts deeper even than that of Benedick, and Rosalind's words fly with an airier grace than those of Beatrice. But nowhere else do we find all the members of a courtly company bearing their part in such gay and well-graced dialogue as in the halls and orchards of the Messina of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

GLOSSARY

abused, v. ii. 104, deceived.
accident, II. i. 193, occurrence.
advertisement, v. i. 32, admonition.
affection, II. ii. 7, inclination.
antickly, v. i. 96, fantastically.
antique, III. i. 63, a grotesque figure.
approved, IV. i. 46, convicted.
argument, II. iii. 12, subject; II. iii. 261, proof; III. i. 96, power of reasoning.
assurance, II. ii. 51, certainty.
attired, IV. i. 146, enwrapped.
authority, IV. i. 37, warranty.

baldrick, I. i. 261, belt.
bird-bolt, I. i. 46, short arrow with a flat head, which, as comparatively harmless, was allowed to be used by fools.
biting, IV. i. 172, afflicting.
block, I. i. 82, the mould on which a hat is shaped.
blood, II. iii. 187, passion. Cf. II. i. 192.
bring, III. ii. 3, escort. Cf. *Henry V*, II. iii. 1–2, 'let me bring thee to Staines'.

canker, I. iii. 29, a wild rose.
carried, IV. i. 212, managed.
censured, II. iii. 251, judged, estimated. Cf. *Cor.* II. i. 28, 'how you are censured here in the city'.
cheapen, II. iii. 35, bid for.
cinque-pace, II. i. 79, a lively dance, the steps of which are supposed to be based on the number five.
circumstances, III. ii. 108, circumlocution.
claw, I. iii. 19, flatter.
close, III. iii. 111, hidden.
cog, v. i. 95, cheat.
coil, III. iii. 101, v. ii. 102, disturbance, turmoil.
complexion, I. i. 334, appearance.
conceit, II. i. 317, conception, idea.
confirmed, II. i. 408, immutable; v. iv. 17, unmoved.
conjecture, IV. i. 108, suspicion.
contemptible, II. iii. 202, contemptuous.
conveyance, II. i. 261, trickery, jugglery.
cross, II. ii. 8, thwart.
cunning, v. i. 239, clever.
curiously, v. i. 160, carefully.
curst, II. i. 22, vicious-tempered.

GLOSSARY

daff, II. iii. 192, v. i. 78, put aside.
dear happiness, I. i. 138, 'a precious piece of good luck' (W. A. Wright). On the Shakespearian uses of 'dear', which represents two words of different origin, see Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*, p. 53.
dearness, III. ii. 103, fondness.
deprave, v. i. 95, defame.
discovers, II. iii. 121, reveals.
drift, II. i. 407, plan, scheme.
dumps, II. iii. 77, melancholy tunes.

ecstasy, II. iii. 171, frenzy.
eftest, IV. ii. 40, most convenient.
engaged, IV. i. 341, pledged.
even, IV. i. 268, plain.

familiar, v. iv. 70, an everyday affair.
flat, II. i. 237, downright, absolute.
foining, v. i. 84, thrusting (a term in fencing).
frame, IV. i. 130, arrangement, plan; IV. i. 191, framing.

giddy, v. iv. 109, pickle.
good-year, I. iii. 1, an expletive of uncertain derivation.
guarded, I. i. 306, trimmed, ornamented.
gull, II. iii. 134, trick.

habit, IV. i. 229, garb.
haggard, III. i. 36, a wild female hawk.

important, II. i. 75, importunate.
impossible, II. i. 148, inconceivable.
incensed, v. i. 247, instigated.
injuries, IV. i. 245, insults.
instance, v. ii. 81, illustrative saying.
instances, II. ii. 42, proofs.
intend, II. ii. 36, pretend.
invention, IV. i. 196, mental initiative.
inwardness, IV. i. 247, intimacy.

jealousy, II. ii. 50, suspicion.

kindly, IV. i. 76, natural.

laced, III. iv. 20, trimmed.
large, II. iii. 222, broad; IV. i. 54, gross.
largely, v. iv. 69, abundantly.
learn, IV. i. 32, teach: a frequent Elizabethan use.
lewd, v. i. 349, base.
liberal, IV. i. 94, licentious.
limed, III. i. 104, caught with bird-lime.
luxurious, IV. i. 43, lustful.

meet, I. i. 51, even, quits.
metal, II. i. 64, material.
misgovernment, IV. i. 101, misconduct.
misprising, III. i. 52, undervaluing.

misprision, IV. i. 187, misunderstanding.
mistrusted, II. i. 194, suspected.
misuse, II. ii. 28, deceive.
misused, II. i. 154, abused.
model, I. iii. 50, ground-plan. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, I. iii. 41–2, 'When we mean to build, We first survey the plot, then draw the model'.

odd quirks, II. iii. 263, irrelevant gibes.
out-facing, V. i. 94, browbeating.

pleasant, I. i. 40, amusing.
politic, V. ii. 65, skilfully constituted.
possess, V. i. 294, inform.
prized, III. i. 90, estimated.
project, III. i. 55, notion, idea.
prolonged, IV. i. 256, postponed.
proper, II. iii. 204, handsome.
propose, III. i. 12, conversation. Cf. *proposing*.
proposing, III. i. 3, conversing.
prospect, IV. i. 231, range of vision.
protest, V. i. 152, proclaim publicly.
prove, I. iii. 78, test.
purchaseth, III. i. 70, acquires, earns.

quaint, III. iv. 22, dainty.
qualify, V. iv. 67, abate.
queasy, II. i. 412, squeamish.

rack, IV. i. 222, stretch to the uttermost.
recheat, I. i. 260, a series of notes sounded on the horn for rallying the hounds.
reclusive, IV. i. 244, retired.
reechy, III. iii. 144, dirty, begrimed.
remorse, IV. i. 213, pity.
reprove, II. iii. 259, disprove.

salv'd, I. i. 336, palliated.
scab, III. iii. 108, scurvy fellow.
scambling, V. i. 94, pushing, contentious.
second, V. i. 2, support, back up.
sentences, II. iii. 268, sententious saws.
shrewd, II. i. 20, sharp.
sort, IV. i. 242, turn out.
squarer, I. i. 87, quarreller.
stale, II. ii. 26, IV. i. 67, woman of ill fame.
state and ancientry, II. i. 82, stateliness and old-time formality.
strain, II. i. 407, lineage.
subscribe, V. ii. 61, proclaim.
success, IV. i. 236, issue.
sure, I. iii. 73, trustworthy.

tax, I. i. 50, censure, accuse; II. iii. 491, task.
temper, II. ii. 22, mix, compound.
terminations, II. i. 265, terms, expressions.

GLOSSARY

trans-shape, v. i. 177, distort.

treatise, I. i. 336, story. Cf. *Macbeth*, v. v. 12, 'Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir'.

unconfirmed, III. iii. 125, inexperienced.

uncovered, IV. i. 312, open, undisguised.

undergoes, v. ii. 59, lies under.

vex, II. ii. 29, afflict.

wide, IV. i. 64, far from the purpose.